

FEBRUARY 2, 1923

No. 905

FAME
• AND •

7 Cents

FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

The Secret Chart

OR THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF THE CRATER
AND OTHER STORIES

By A Self-Made Man



The fumes of the gas ascended from the crater and were breathed by Jim. He uttered a cry as he felt his senses leaving him, staggered back, and would have fallen had not Will and the Indians seized his arms.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

Issued weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 160 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 2, 1923

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THE SECRET CHART

OR, THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF THE CRATER

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Message From the Sea.

"It's a fine day for a sail," said Jimmy French to his particular friend, Will Larkins, as the pair stood at the head of old Meigss Wharf, San Francisco, some forty years ago.

"Bet your life it is," replied Will, glancing over the sparkling waters of the bay. "Are you thinking of taking a boat and going out?"

"What do you say about it?"

"I'm with you if you pay the freight. Just at present I'm clean busted."

"You're always busted, Will."

"That isn't my fault. My old man won't give me enough spending money."

"How much do you call enough?"

"I could worry along on four bits a week."

"If we stay out four hours it will cost me a dollar."

"Have you got a dollar?"

"I've got one half, two quarters, and three dimes."

"You're rich," said Will, enviously.

"Oh, I've got more in my trunk."

"Where did you get it all?"

"My uncle was down from Napa the other day. I'm a great favorite with him. He presented me with five shares of Consolidated Virginia, as a nest-egg, he called it."

"Well?"

"The day he went away I took the stock to a broker and sold it for \$6 a share."

"You did! He didn't expect you to do that, did he?"

"No; but I generally do what people don't expect of me," said Jimmy with a grin. "That's why I'm flush. So as you're willing to go with me, we'll take a sailboat. The one we used last Saturday, and which is called the Sea Bird. It's floating down there waiting for somebody to come along and make use of her. Come along. There's old Mitchell, her owner, smoking his pipe and ruminating as usual. A dollar looks as big as a house to him."

The man in question was seated on the landing steps with his legs crossed.

"Hello, pop, want to rent the Sea Bird for the afternoon?" said Jimmy.

"Twenty-five cents an hour, son," said the old shellback, cocking an eye on the lad.

"I know it. Here's a dollar. If we get back

under four hours there'll be something coming to me."

"Right you are. Take her along."

The boys got in, hoisted the sail, and put off.

"Where are you going?" asked Will.

"We'll go out to the Heads, if you don't mind."

"Let her rip."

"If teacher heard you say that, there'd be a rip in your pants. She'd send you to the principal, and he'd tickle you nicely with his rattan."

"It wouldn't be the first time," grinned Will.

"I'll bet it wouldn't. What were you doing when I came over to your house?"

"I was making something," said Will, evasively.

"You were up to some funny business. Own up now. I won't tell on you."

"It was a patent plaster I was making out of melted beeswax and other things."

"What were you going to do with it?"

"Put it on teacher's chair. It sticks both ways. When she gets up the chair will go with her."

"And what will happen to you when she learns who did it?"

"She won't learn."

"There'll be a riot in the room."

"Who cares?"

"Not me, for I won't have a hand in it. She'll suspect you, though, for you are always up to some lark."

"Suspicion isn't proof."

"You'll have to lie to save yourself. I don't believe in that. The copybook says he who lies will steal."

"The copybook is a liar. I wouldn't steal for anything."

"Suppose you found a purse in the street with five dollars in it, and you found out who it belonged to, would you keep it?"

"No, but I probably wouldn't find out who it belonged to."

"Would you try to find out?"

"Of course I would."

"That's right. Honesty is the best policy. Say, what's that floating yonder? It looks like a square bottle."

"That's what it is."

"I'll steer for it and you pick it up."

"What for?"

"Because I tell you to. I'm the skipper of this craft."

In a few minutes Will reached over, seized the bottle by the neck and pulled it on board.

"It's a foreign bottle," he said, after looking at the label.

"Hand it over. I see it's corked. Maybe there's something in it."

"If there was it wouldn't float. It's empty."

"There might be a message in it."

"A message!"

"Yes—a message from the sea. You've read about such things, haven't you?"

"Sure I have. There was a paragraph in the Bulletin the other day about a bottle that had floated across the Atlantic. Somebody living at Nahant, near Boston, picked it up on the beach. There was a message in it from somebody in Ireland."

"I read the story. It was a message from a girl to her fellow, a chap named Hennessy. There was no address given on it. A Boston paper printed it in full. It wound up, 'If you don't get this, let me know, lovingly your sweetheart, Nora.' Pretty good that. I guess it was a hoax, but it came across the ocean all right. I wonder where this bottle came from?"

"China, maybe."

"Or Australia."

"Or the Fiji Islands."

"Get out. The label is Dutch. The bottle held Holland gin."

Jimmy held it up to the sun.

"By George, there is a paper in it."

"Pull out the cork and read it."

"The cork is stuck in."

"Break the bottle, then."

"I guess I'll wait till I get home and pull the cork. It might be a message from a shipwrecked party."

"What will you do if it is?"

"What do you suppose I'll do, you ninny? Turn it over to the Exchange."

"I'd laugh if somebody threw it over from an outgoing vessel to-day and it has just floated back."

"It doesn't take much to make you laugh."

"I wouldn't mind having the laugh on you," chuckled Will.

"You play that trick on teacher, and you won't do much laughing."

In course of an hour the boat reached the outer entrance to the Golden Gate.

"How much farther are you going?" asked Will.

"Half a mile or so."

The sun was setting in a blaze of glory, and Jimmy kept the boat pointed so that the mainsail would shield their eyes. It looked a bit misty, which ought to have warned the boys that a fog, so prevalent in summer, was forming out at sea. They had another hint in the dropping of the wind. 'Frisco fogs are very much like great jets of steam, and it doesn't take them long to roll in till the upper bay and northern part of the city is enveloped in a damp curtain as thick as pea soup. The course Jimmy was steering was taking the boat diagonally out to sea. She wasn't going very fast now, as the wind had become light. The tide, however, was beginning to ebb, and that was the worst thing that could have happened to them under the circumstances.

"Turn about and run back, Jimmy," said Will.

"The fog will catch us if you don't."

Jimmy took the hint and turned the boat around. But the wind was gradually failing them. Only for that fact, fog or no fog, they could have easily got back, though they would have found some trouble in fetching Meiggs Wharf. In an incredibly short time the fog overtook the boat, and blotted out their surroundings. Ten minutes before they could see clear to the horizon and blink in the sun's face; now the sun could only be distinguished as a glow through the mist, and they could hardly see each other in the boat. It was still broad daylight, but the light was yellow behind them and gray in front toward the bay. The sail bellied out some and the boat forged ahead a few yards, then it flapped and hung motionless and the little craft lost headway. The puffs of wind came less frequently, and then stopped altogether. The sailboat was becalmed and at the mercy of the tide, which was setting out into the broad Pacific. The short four-hour sail the lads started upon was destined to turn into a lengthy cruise, full of adventure, with a fortune in perspective.

CHAPTER II.—Becalmed in a Fog.

"This is a nice fix we're in," grumbled Will, with a shiver, for the mist rolled damp and clammy about the boat and the boys, and gave one a moist and not over pleasant feeling.

"Oh, we'll come out all right," replied Jimmy, whose nature was optimistic, and he never looked on the dark side of things. "We're only half a mile outside the Heads, and the tide will carry us in."

"How do you know the tide is running in?"

"When we picked the bottle up it was coming in with the tide."

"But that was more than an hour ago."

"Suppose it was, I don't think it has changed yet."

Which showed that Jimmy was ignorant of the real facts. When they picked the bottle up the tide was practically slack, between ebb and flow, and during the hour and a half which had intervened it had turned to the former, and there would be no change for a matter of five hours.

"Suppose it has changed?" persisted Will, who was disposed to take a gloomy view of their situation, which wasn't strange under the conditions they were up against.

"What's the use of supposing a thing? Anyway, the wind is likely to spring up again, and then we will sail right back."

"How can we find our way in this murk?"

"Easily enough. We are headed east, and the Golden Gate is before us."

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Of course I am. You can see the reflection of the sun behind us."

"But the sun is going down, and when it's out of sight you won't know where you are."

"It won't go down for an hour yet. Anyway, we'll still be headed in the right direction."

"But the tide might turn the boat around."

"I don't think so. As long as it's calm the boat will stay in the same position. I'll hold the rudder just as it is."

"I'm getting a chill. I'm going to crawl under the half-deck and try and keep warm."

"Good idea. I'll tie the tiller, so it won't move, and crawl under with you."

"But one of us ought to stay out here and keep watch."

"What can you see?"

"You can't see anything, but you can hear. An Italian fishing smack, or an incoming ship, might run us down in this fog and we would be drowned."

Jimmy admitted that there was a possibility of such a thing, but still he argued that the chances were against such a catastrophe. He was willing to risk it rather than take a continuous fog bath. He tied the tiller and the boys crawled under the half-deck, where they felt more comfortable than in the open air, though the fog found its way under the deck, too.

"We were foolish to come out here," said Will.

"Maybe we were, but there is no use of howling over that now."

"We may not get back before morning. Mitchell will charge you two bits an hour for all the time we are out. That will make a hole in your cash."

"Oh, I'll compromise with him. I don't own a Comstock mine."

"My folks will give me thunder for staying out all night."

"Why should they when you couldn't help yourself?"

"My father will say I had no business to put myself in such a predicament."

"Blame it on me."

"That won't do any good."

"I'll call at your house and square things for you."

"If we're out all night we'll lose our supper."

"Then we'll have twice the appetite for breakfast," chuckled Jimmy.

"But I don't want to go hungry all night."

"I know, but it will be a new sensation for you."

"Say, you seem to take things mighty easy. Do you like being out here in a fog, with the prospect of staying all night?"

"No, I don't like it any better than you do; but will growling over the matter get us back any quicker?"

"I don't know that it will. Still it's pretty hard to be cheerful when you feel down in the mouth."

"I don't often feel down in the mouth. I find it makes a fellow feel better by taking things as they come and making the most of them."

"I wish I could look on things as you do, but I can't."

Thus time passed, the sun went down and darkness fell upon the sea, turning the fog into a dark, pulsating mass. Not a sound broke the stillness that reigned around the boat, now more than a mile outside the Heads. The boys had no idea that they were drifting steadily out on the Pacific. The mere suspicion of such a thing would have given Will a fit. Jimmy tried to cheer his companion up by talking on subjects that he thought would interest him. This went well enough until a sense of hunger started Will growling again.

"What time do you suppose it is?" he said at last.

"Haven't the least idea," replied Jimmy.

"I wonder how things are outside?"

"About the same."

"If the wind had started up we'd know it, wouldn't we?"

"Sure. We'd feel the boat moving. She hasn't moved since before we came in here."

"I wish the wind would start up. I'm getting awfully hungry."

"Get out and whistle for it."

"Who good would that do?"

"I don't know that it would do any good."

"Then why do you tell me to do it?"

"Because I've read about sailors whistling for wind in a calm."

"Did the wind come?"

"I don't recall that it did. Sailors are curious sort of chaps. They believe in things that few other people take stock in."

"I know. They're awfully superstitious. A sailor told me once that he wouldn't go to sea on a Friday for double pay."

"I believe you. You've heard of a bird called the Stormy Petrel, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Sailors call it Mother Cary's chicken. They believe it represents the soul of some seaman lost at sea. If you were at sea and shot one of them, the crew would feel like throwing you overboard. In their opinion it brings bad luck on a ship to injure one of those birds."

"Do you think it does?"

"No. The Stormy Petrel is just a sea bird. It only shows the ridiculous notions sailors carry in their heads."

"If they hear strange noises in the hold or fore-castle they think the ship is haunted."

"Sure they do. It was sailors who started the superstition of the Flying Dutchman—the spectral vessel that they claimed haunted the seas off the Cape of Good Hope."

For a while Will forgot he was so very hungry, but when ten o'clock came around he declared he couldn't hold out until morning.

"What are you talking about?" said Jimmy.

"Suppose we were shipwrecked out in the middle of the Pacific, and had nothing to eat, we'd be worse off, wouldn't we?"

"Don't mention it. We'd starve to death."

The boat was several miles west of the Heads by this time, but the outward trend of the tide was nearing its end, and a period of slack water would presently set in. Then the flood tide would set in, and they would be carried back to the coast two or three miles to the south of the Golden Gate, by which time the fog would probably not be so dense. At any rate if things had not happened they would have got back to Meiggs Wharf some time during the morning. But something occurred just then that made a lot of difference in the future movements of the fog-bound lads.

CHAPTER III.—The Deserted Craft.

"What's that?" ejaculated Will suddenly.

The boat seemed to be bumping stern on against something in its path.

"That must be a piece of timber that has floated up against us," said Jimmy. "It can't be anything else unless it's a log. I'll go out and see."

He crawled out backward, and when he stood up he saw a great dark object loom up in the fog against which the sailboat had swung.

"Gee! That must be a ship," thought the boy. "She's becalmed like ourselves. Hey, Will, come out—quick!"

Will lost no time in doing so. He was in half a panic, for he thought something had happened.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"We've floated up against a vessel," said Jimmy. "Look."

Will looked and saw the dark apparition against which they lay.

"We'd better get aboard of her. We'll be safer than in this boat, and we can get something to eat," he said.

Jimmy looked to see how he would tie the sailboat to the vessel. He finally felt a rope hanging down over the side of the big craft, which was something not shipshape, and he tied the painter of the sailboat to it. Then grabbing the rope and telling Will to wait till he had asked permission for them both to come aboard, he shinned up to the bulwark, straddled it and dropped on the deck. The deck being lost in the fog, he could not see anybody. He listened for the voices of men, but the only sound he heard was the creaking of a rope through a pulley, caused by the slight heave of the vessel on the surface of the ocean. Not knowing which was forward and which aft, he started to the left on the chance that the cabin lay that way. It happened that he took the right direction.

As he followed the bulwark he presently came to a short ladder which led up to the poop deck.

The stern railing began at the top of the ladder, ran the length of the cabin, circled the stern, and continued around on the other side to a similar ladder.

Between the rail and the side of the cabin roof was a passage, duplicated on the other side.

Both passages ended at the open space where the wheel and binnacle stood.

Jimmy mounted the ladder, followed the passage and came out aft.

He knew just where he was, for he had a pretty good knowledge of vessels of all rigs.

He naturally expected to find a sailor standing at the wheel, even though the craft was becalmed, for at sea a man always serves his trick at the wheel during his watch.

Jimmy felt his way to the binnacle, which, with its brass hood as a protection to the compass, stands directly in front of the wheel so that the steersman, who faces forward, can look directly into the opening and see the face of the compass card.

At night the interior of the hood is lighted by a small lamp.

When Jimmy reached the binnacle he saw the outline of the wheel in part.

No one was attending to it.

To make sure, he walked around and saw that the after deck was deserted.

Furthermore, there was no light in the binnacle hood.

Jimmy thought this was strange.

He went to the opening at the head of the companion stairs leading down to the cabin.

All was dark down there, but there was nothing

singular in that, for the door below might be closed.

Looking forward along the roof of the cabin, all was dark there, too.

He couldn't make out the skylight, but he did expect to see a glow of light shining through it.

The lamp under the cabin skylight is always kept burning through the night, though turned low, for the benefit of the mates when they turn out at the change of the watch.

"I guess it must be pretty late and everybody has turned in," thought Jimmy, "but there must be a watch on duty forward, and the mate in charge should be here on the poop. I don't see him, though. Maybe he stepped below to get a nip to warm himself. There ought to be a couple of lights somewhere on the stern rail, and one or two forward. Still, lights don't amount to much in a thick fog like this one. I'll have to go down into the cabin and see who I can find there."

Down the stairs he walked, his shoes clicking on the brassbound steps. The door below was open and the cabin as dark as pitch. Jimmy felt in his pocket for a match, for he always carried a supply of that useful article, flashed one and looked around. The cabin was a scene of confusion. Clothes were tossed about mingled with numerous other articles, and things were generally at sixes and sevens. Lying directly at his feet was a heavy Colt's revolver. Jimmy picked it up and looked at it. It was cocked and seemed to be fully loaded. He laid it on the cabin table on top of a rough pea jacket.

"Things look mighty funny here," thought Jimmy, strange suspicions of foul play beginning to form in his brain. "Something has happened. I wonder if there has been a mutiny? I may find a dead body or two next. I wouldn't be surprised if the vessel is deserted. In that case if Will and I could get her into 'Frisco harbor we could claim salvage. That would put a bunch of money in our pockets."

Jimmy struck another match. The door of the captain's cabin stood open. He stepped in and found more confusion there.

"That settles it. Something terrible has happened, or things wouldn't be in this shape," he said.

With his heart in his mouth, for he fully expected to find one or more dead men in the cabin, he entered each of the other staterooms, the doors of which were likewise open. He saw the same confusion everywhere, but, to his relief, not a corpse. He entered the passage which led to the main deck. He saw two closed doors on either side. The first one had a bunk and lockers, and clothes hung from hooks. Everything was shipshape in it. The room opposite was similar in appearance. The room ahead of it was full of sailcloth and had a carpenter's chest.

It showed no particular disturbance. The fourth and last room was the steward's pantry. There were evidences here that the steward had been getting ready to serve a meal in the cabin, and had left things standing around. The door of the passage forward stood wide open, which accounted for both the passage and the cabin being hazy with the fog. The deserted cabin assured Jimmy that the vessel was wholly deserted, and he made no further attempt to find anybody. He made his way to that part of the bulwark

where he had come aboard and called down to his companion.

"Hello!" replied Will. "You've been a mighty long time talking to the skipper, or whoever you saw. Do I come aboard?"

"Shin up," answered Jimmy laconically.

In less than a minute Will's body loomed up beside him.

"Jump on deck," said Jimmy, preceding him.

Will lost no time in doing so. He was chilled to the bone from standing in the boat waiting for his friend.

"If I don't have a cup of coffee, or some hot stuff, I'll have the cold of my life," he said.

"Come with me," said Jimmy.

He took Will into the cabin passage and closed the door.

"It's awfully dark in here," said Will. "Why don't they show a light?"

"For a mighty good reason," replied Jimmy.

"What reason?"

"Don't throw a fit when I tell you."

"Why?" asked the astonished Will.

"Because there's nobody aboard."

"Nobody aboard!" gasped his companion.

"That's what I said. The vessel is deserted."

"Deserted! Come now, you're joking."

"Nary joke. There's been a mutiny, or something of that sort, for the cabin is all endwise. The captain, mates and others who berth aft, have disappeared. Maybe they were thrown overboard, or made to walk the plank. At any rate, they do not appear to have been killed in the cabin. I haven't been forward, but I take it for granted that the crew are gone, too. If there has been trouble between them and the officers, they wouldn't stay in the vessel to face the consequences."

"Holy mackerel!" gurgled Will, staring through the darkness at Jimmy.

CHAPTER IV.—The Occupant of the Forecastle.

"Well, never mind, it isn't our funeral," said Jimmy. "We'll stand aboard till morning, at any rate. There are bunks to burn, so we can have a snooze after we get something to eat."

"Is there anything to eat about?" said Will in a hungry tone.

"Bet your life. The pantry is full of food, but there's no hot coffee. If you're chilled you can help yourself to some liquor in the swinging tray under the cabin skylight. It's probably whisky. That will warm your blood."

"Never mind. Let's go into the pantry."

Into the pantry they went. Jimmy lighted the lamp there and they looked around. There was lots of food there. Jars of potted meats and tins of preserved vegetables on the protected shelves. An opened box of soda crackers on the floor under the steward's working shelf. Half a ham swinging in its canvas jacket from a hook, and two or three more hams which had not been touched. In fact, there was lots of eatables in sight. The boys were satisfied to fall to on a plate of sliced ham cut by the steward, possibly for supper, using crackers to make sandwiches of it. They ate like the hungry lads they were, and cleaned up the ham.

"We'll top off with a jar of that marmalade," said Jimmy, taking a jar down and proceeding to open it with his jackknife.

"I'd like a drink," said Will.

He spied a red tank attached to one corner of the room and labeled water. He put a cup under the brass cock and turned it. He put the cup to his mouth.

"Whew! That's terrible," he said, laying the cup down.

The water certainly smelled strong. Jimmy smelled it and agreed that it was no good.

"It's been standing too long," he said. "Maybe this vessel has been deserted several days. There's some white wine in that box. Get out a bottle and we'll drink that."

A corkscrew hung from a nail, and Will drew the cork. The wine was mild and went very well. They finished their repast, and then Jimmy led the way to the cabin. He lighted the skylight lamp and let his friend gaze around on the state of things.

"There's been trouble on board," admitted Will. "Maybe the vessel sprung a leak and was abandoned in a hurry because the skipper thought she was sinking."

"Don't believe it," replied Jimmy. "She's high in the water. No danger of her sinking."

"I couldn't guess what has happened. Mutinies don't happen often, and I don't think there was one here. The vessel looks to me as if she had been abandoned in a hurry."

"We can tell better in the morning when the fog is gone. We are close to the Golden Gate, and if we can sail her into the harbor we will have a claim on the vessel for good money. This cruise of ours might turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to us. It might make us rich."

"Do you think so?" said Will. "That would be fine."

"Sure it would. Now let's turn in."

And turn in they did, and in spite of the novelty of their surroundings they were soon fast asleep. The wind sprang up, an offshore breeze, shortly afterward, and as the sails of the vessel, which was a small brig, were spread, she bore off to the westward, getting further and further away from the coast of California every hour. It is true she didn't sail as she should have done, because her wheel swung this way and that. The consequence was she would come up and then fall away, very like a drunken man staggering along on the sidewalk. Still she made considerable progress, as the wind freshened with the coming of dawn, and when sunrise lighted up the face of the ocean, now free of the fog left behind, she was clear out of sight of land, and many miles to the south of the Farallones, which are about twenty-five miles west of San Francisco. The boys having gone to sleep late overslept themselves. It was nine o'clock when Jimmy turned out and dressed himself.

The cabin, in spite of its disordered aspect, looked quite cheerful now, for sunshine flashed through the skylight and glistened on the decanter and double row of glasses upon the swinging tray. The tray had been motionless when the boys turned in, but under the swing of the gently rolling brig it had a constant oscillating motion.

"The vessel is under way," said Jimmy; "I must hurry up and see where we have got to."

He did not stop to awaken Will, but opening the forward cabin door, rushed up to the after or poop deck. He expected to see the Golden Gate close ahead, instead of which he gazed upon a wide expanse of sparkling ocean, not even dotted by a single sail. The water line extended clear to the horizon in every direction. Jimmy was staggered.

"Great Scott! what does this mean?" he ejaculated.

It meant but one thing—that he and Will were far out at sea. After staring around the horizon in utter bewilderment, Jimmy rushed down into the cabin and, seizing his companion, nearly pulled him out of his bunk.

"Here, I say, what are you doing? What's up?" protested Will.

"Get up and come on deck," cried Jimmy excitedly.

"What's on deck? Anybody aboard?"

"You'll see when you get there."

"You look excited. Have you discovered any dead bodies?"

"No. Haven't looked for any."

"Then what's in the wind?" said Will, hustling into his clothes.

"You'll have a fit when you get up where you can see things."

"I will? Tell me what's up. You might as well."

"Tell you nothing. I've just had the surprise of my life, and I'm bound you shall have the same."

"Something's wrong, I'll bet," said Will, getting his jacket. "I'm ready."

"Come on, then."

When they reached the companion stairs, Jimmy stopped.

"Go up first," he said.

"What for?" asked Will, holding back.

"Go on and don't ask questions."

Jimmy's word and actions had made Will nervous, and he showed it.

"You go up first," he said.

"No. I want you to see things as I saw them."

"There are a lot of bloody corpses on deck, I know. There's been a mutiny. I don't like to look at dead people, particularly if they're covered with blood."

"There are no corpses. At least I didn't see any. It isn't that at all."

"What is it?"

"Get up and see and don't stand here like a gilly. Get a wiggle on."

Will reluctantly walked up the steps, but he went very slowly. He was afraid of what he was going to see. Jimmy followed close behind him. He finally stepped out on deck and looked around. He first looked forward, but the rise of the cabin roof prevented him from seeing the main deck. Then he looked upward and saw that the vessel was under sail.

"We're under sail," he cried. "The crew is aboard."

"No, there isn't a soul aboard that I have seen," said Jimmy.

"Then how did the sails get up? You couldn't have hoisted them."

"They've been up right along. When the brig was abandoned they were left spread."

Then Will gazed around upon the ocean, and he fairly gasped.

"Why, where are we?" he cried in consternation.

"Out at sea," replied Jimmy.

"How did we get here? What shall we do? We'll never get home again."

Will was all up in the air as Jimmy expected he would be.

"The brig being under sail, she started off as soon as the wind sprang up, and that must have happened during the night. What we are to do I don't know, for we can't work this big craft. She's headed straight out into the Pacific, and we have got to go with her. Our only chance of getting back home is to be picked up by some vessel bound for San Francisco."

"But we can't be far from the coast yet. In what direction does California lie?"

"That way," said Jimmy, pointing.

"How do you know?"

"Because it lies to the east, and there's the sun, which rises in the east."

"What's the matter with working the brig around and running back?"

You mean by the aid of the wheel?"

"Of course."

"This is a square rigger and the yards would have to be braced around before the vessel could be put on a new tack. We can't do that. We have got to let her run. We have no more control over her than we'd have over a runaway horse that had taken the bit between its teeth."

"Oh, my!" groaned Will. "But we've got the sailboat. We can leave this vessel and sail back in that."

"That would be a great risk, for we may be thirty or forty miles out at sea."

Will groaned again.

"What fools we were to come aboard!" he said gloomily.

"Never mind. We're safe enough as long as the weather holds fair. We won't starve, for there's lots of food in the pantry."

That remark reminded the boys that they were hungry, and Will suggested that they should adjourn to the pantry and get their breakfast. That suited Jimmy, so they went below and divided a jar of potted meat, which they ate with crackers and washed down with some of the white wine. And while they ate they talked over the situation. As usual, Jimmy looked on the bright side, while Will could see nothing but disaster looming up ahead of them.

"Never mind, Will, don't worry over what you can't help. We'll be rescued in a day or two and taken back to 'Frisco, then think what a fine adventure we'll have to tell the boys. They'll all take their hats off to us. The newspapers are bound to get our story, and our names will appear in print. Think of that, old man! The mayor of the city won't have such a lot on us."

"That's all very fine, but on the other hand we may float way out on the ocean, a thousand miles or more, before a ship passes near enough to see us. And in the meantime a storm might come up, upset the vessel and drown us both. Anyway, these provisions won't last forever, and when they're gone we'll starve to death. Then we'll never get home to tell what we've been through," said Will.

"Say, you wouldn't be happy unless you were miserable, would you, Will? I don't know what you will do when you grow up, get married and have to hustle for a living if you strike a snag. Everybody has his ups and downs. My father failed twice in business, but he didn't sit down and cry when things were looking black. He hustled around to get a fresh grip, and he got it. Now he's doing fine and has money in bank against another rainy day. You're always looking for trouble when things are not running smooth. You'd kick if a house fell on you."

"If a house fell on me I wouldn't be able to kick, you chump."

"My remark was not meant to be taken in the literal sense. Have you ate all you can stuff into yourself?"

"Yes. I'm through."

"Then we'll get back on deck and look around. We'll go out the back way, through the passage. I'm going forward to look into the forecabin and see how things are there."

He knew that the "sailors' parlor" would be dark, and though he was as plucky as any lad of his size, he decided to take the revolver with him as a precaution. He got it, and then he and Will walked out on the main deck. The brig's deck looked in fair order, though a number of things were scattered about, as if dropped by the crew in the hurry of a sudden departure. The vessel was equipped with four boats, besides a skiff tied down on the roof of the galley. Two of the boats were missing, and the falls were dangling close to the water on the port side. The other three boats were in their places. The galley door was ajar, and the boys looked in. Pots and pans were scattered on the floor, and the little house in great confusion. The stove was half full of dead ashes. An overturned can proved to be full of unground coffee.

"We'll have coffee for dinner," said Will, putting it back on a shelf, "that is if we can find any decent water."

A barrel strapped outside, with a loose, square wooden cover over a square hole held by a piece of leather for a hinge, was nearly full of water. Jimmy investigated it, and said if it was boiled first he guessed they could make use of it. Leaving the galley they continued forward to the opening of the forecabin, the slide of which was wide open. Jimmy stuck his head down and shouted "Ahoy!"

He received no reply, and did not expect any.

"There's not a soul aboard, as I supposed," he said.

"Are you going down?"

"Yes, but I'll get that lantern I saw hanging in the galley. No use trying to look the place over in the dark."

"Say, look at that cage at the back of the galley. I didn't notice it before. The door is smashed. Is that the way they carry livestock on a ship?" said Will.

"I suppose so. It looks too big for poultry. Maybe they carried half a dozen pigs so the skipper and the mates could have fresh pork as long as the animals lasted. Hello! I hear a rustling noise down in the forecabin. Maybe the last of the porkers is down there."

Jimmy looked down and uttered an exclamation.

"What's the matter?" asked Will.

"I see a pair of glittering eyes in that corner."

"There must be a man aboard there, then."

"No man would have such eyes. Take a look."

Will did, and also saw the eyes, which looked red and fiery, and were moving back and forth like the swing of a pendulum.

"Holy mackerel! It's some kind of an animal," he said. "Maybe it's a lion or a tig— Oh, heavens, it's coming toward us."

"Nonsense!" said Jimmy, taking another look. "Wait till I get the lantern and I'll find out what the eyes belong to."

He ran to the galley, took down the lantern, and was lighting it, when he heard an awful yell from his companion. Looking out, he saw Will running away from the forecabin opening for all he was worth, with fear stamped on his features. Then he saw issue from the opening a great flat head, followed by a long, thick neck, and a still longer body. A serpent, seemingly of enormous size, was gliding out on deck. That was enough for Jimmy. As Will flew past, heading for the cabin, Jimmy cut after him, and neither stopped till they hit the cabin passage.

CHAPTER V.—What Was in the Bottle.

Then Jimmy faced about and looked forward. A big snake, of the boa constrictor species, and about twenty feet long, was gliding about the deck near the entrance to the forecabin.

"My gracious!" cried Jimmy. "What are we going to do? That reptile will make short work of both of us if it can reach us."

Will was almost in a state of collapse. He had caught sight of the snake at close quarters, and the shock had scared him from his boots up. He got as far as the cabin, and rushing into the state-room he had occupied during the night, slammed the door and put his back to it. Jimmy, having recovered his nerve, stood at the passage door watching the boat. It was a big specimen, but not so large as it appeared at first sight. It glided around the forward part of the vessel, and then partly entered the galley. It had found food there after the evacuation of the brig, and was looking for more. It was disappointed. Then it started aft. Jimmy waited till the reptile got within easy range, and fired his revolver at it.

The bullet nicked its neck, and the boa uttered an angry hiss. Jimmy fired again and wounded its body. Another hiss, and the snake, spying the boy, started for him. Jimmy stood his ground and pumped a third bullet at the reptile, which entered its mouth and drew blood. Then he shut the door and bolted it. Rushing through the cabin, Jimmy closed the companion door and bolted that. He didn't believe that the snake could force entrance, but the uncomfortable reflection remained—that the reptile had full possession of the deck. He and Will were prisoners in the cabin. It didn't take him long to figure out the cause of the desertion of the brig in a hurry by officers and crew. The boa, which was a passenger on the vessel, probably intended for a circus menagerie, had broken out of its cage and made things so unpleasant for all hands that to save their lives the brig was abandoned. Possibly an investigation of the forecabin would show that

two or three of the crew had been killed by the snake. What Jimmy feared most was that the boat might crash down through the skylight, in which case there would be something doing in the cabin. He heard his snakeship bump against the passage door and hiss outside. After a while he heard it no more. He routed Will out of his stateroom.

"Where is it now?" asked his companion.

"Somewhere about the deck, or it might be up on the poop," he answered.

"This is awful," said Will. "I knew something else would happen to us."

"Of course you did. I'm afraid you're a Jonah. You're always expecting the worst to happen."

"What are we going to do? We can't go on deck now."

"I've three bullets left. Maybe I'll kill the thing."

"I heard you fire. Did you hit it?"

"I did, and made it squeal."

"It's too big for you to kill it."

"Not if I hit it in the right place."

"You mean the head?"

"If I could lodge a ball in its brain that ought to put it out of business."

"You couldn't get near enough to do that."

"I cut its mouth just the same. It was only six feet away when I fired the last time."

"You have more nerve than me."

"If I didn't I'd feel sorry for myself. Let's go to the passage door and take a look."

"Nixy. The snake might be watching the door."

"I don't believe it. Come on."

Will wouldn't, and Jimmy had to go alone. He unbolted the door and opened it cautiously an inch. The snake wasn't in sight. He ventured to open the door wider and poke his head out. The snake lay stretched out near the port poop ladder. Its head lay in a pool of blood. It was not dead, but no longer formidable. Jimmy's last shot had entered the base of its brain, through its mouth, and had practically settled its career. The boy looked at it attentively. Then he went into the pantry, got the empty potted meat jar and, taking aim at the snake, threw it. It hit the reptile on the neck, and it worked its body around, but not with any great degree of animation.

"I guess I did it up," said Jimmy.

He called Will and told him the snake was pretty well done for.

"I'm going to take another shot at its head," he said.

Will came to the door and watched him approach the snake.

"Better be careful," he called out.

Jimmy was careful, though the boa did not look very aggressive. He fired two shots into its head and settled its goose for good, though the snake's tail was not entirely motionless until after sunset that day. The finish of the boa constrictor was a great relief to the boys. It would have gone hard with them to have been cooped up in the cabin with such a big reptile at liberty, and liable to come on them unawares if they ventured out.

"Seems to me the skipper and officers should have done as well as I did," said Jimmy. "I wonder how far out to sea they were when they left the brig. The captain will have a nice explanation to make to the owners."

The boys went on the poop to look for a sail,

but none was in sight. Jimmy decided that the brig ought to be brought up on her course and the wheel lashed, even though this course was taking them further away from home. This was done with Will's help. The outlook indicated continued fair weather, and before it changed they hoped to be sighted and taken off. The wind freshened during the afternoon, and the brig bowled along in fine shape, just as though her officers and crew were aboard. The sailboat was sailing along the lee side of the vessel, which shut off the wind from her sail.

"Old Mitchell will wonder where we have carried his boat," said Jimmy. "He will call at my house as sure as anything and tell my mother that you and I went off in his boat yesterday afternoon and haven't returned. As he saw us start for the Heads, he'll judge we were caught by the fog. My father will hire a tug and start out looking for us, but that won't do him any good. If we don't get back soon our folks will fear that we were capsized and drowned."

When the boys came on deck next morning the wind had calmed down and the brig was not making much headway. Jimmy thought it a good chance to drop into the sailboat and lower the sail. This he did, and put the stoppers about it. To make sure that the little boat wouldn't get away, he called for another rope, and Will threw him one, which he made fast to the sailboat's stern. Then picking up the empty gin bottle with the paper inside, he stuffed it into his pockets and returned on board. He got a corkscrew and drew the cork of the bottle. Then he pulled out a stiff roll of paper.

"Now we'll see what the message is," he said.

"I think we ought to write a message about ourselves, put it in the bottle and send it adrift," said Will.

"We can do that," nodded Jimmy, spreading the stiff piece of parchment-like paper on the pantry shelf and smoothing out the kinks in it. Both boys bent over it.

"Seems to be a sort of chart," said Will. "There's a cross at that corner with the four cardinal points of the compass—north, east, south and west."

"You're right," nodded Jimmy. "The outline, filling most of the paper, indicates the marking of an island, for the word 'Water' is written on the four sides of it. This indentation here is marked 'Cove.' Behind it the word 'Bluffs.' Over here is a 'hill.' On the hill three rude trees, with feathery tops, in line. Here 'Banana Grove.' Down there 'Beach.' Further down another 'Cove.' Under the compass marking are the words 'Latitude' and 'Longitude,' which are not given. The name of the island is not given, either. As it stands it's an incomplete chart of an island, and amounts to nothing."

"If it amounts to nothing, why was it so carefully corked up in that bottle and sent adrift," said Will.

"Ask me something easier. It might have been done for a joke."

"Are you going to keep it as a curiosity?"

"Sure. I want to show it to old Mitchell. He might be able to discover something about it that we can't. It isn't drawn on common paper, but upon some stiff material like the bleached skin of an animal. Looks as if the person who made it

intended it for some purpose, but failed to finish it."

"Maybe he was shipwrecked on the island, and didn't know its name, nor the latitude or longitude. He could have figured the compass directions from the position of the sun. That would show him east and west, and by standing with his arms extended, one toward the sun and the other away from it, he could easily locate north and south," said Will.

"Great head you've got, Will. Your supposition might be correct. A sailor wrecked on a lone island he had never seen before might easily be excused if he didn't know its name, or its latitude or longitude. Still he should have some general idea of the latter unless he was an ignorant fellow."

"Sailors are not very well educated. Most of them, the chaps before the mast, are not familiar with the principles of navigation. They couldn't sail a ship under varying conditions to save their lives. At any rate, I have heard so."

"They're not hired to sail a vessel, but to follow the orders they get from the officers. Navigation is a science which has to be learned like anything else that requires study. You've got to be something of a mathematician in order to make the necessary calculations when you start in to take the ship's position by the sun with the aid of a sextant. This is done every day at noon, if the weather permits. When you can't get the sun you've got to get around it in other ways, as near as you can," said Jimmy.

He folded up the paper and put it in his pocket, then the boys went on deck.

Another day passed and then Jimmy told Will they must try and get the sailboat hoisted up up deck so as to keep it from lashing about the sides of the brig in case a storm came up. So the next morning they succeeded in rigging up a block and fall and passing a rope around the sailboat near the bow. After which they hoisted the boat on board the vessel and secured her in such a manner that she was stationary. It was hard work, but it was finally accomplished shortly after the noon hour.

CHAPTER VI.—The Man From the Sea.

"Now," said Jimmy, when they returned to the poop, under a glorious sparkling sky, the brig gliding swiftly along under a spanking breeze, "how shall we amuse ourselves till we get sleep?"

"If we had a checker-board, or a pack of cards, we could pass the time first rate."

"Then I appoint you as a committee of one to go and hunt for one or the other."

"I'll go if you will."

"What do you want me for? Go yourself."

"No. The cabin is dark, I don't want to go alone."

"What are you afraid of? Here's a match, light the lamp under the skylight."

"I guess we can amuse ourselves lying here and looking up at the stars."

Jimmy chuckled and remained quiet awhile, then he said:

"Will, do you know, I think this brig is haunted."

"Haunted!" cried Will, starting up in alarm.

"I heard strange sounds in the cabin last night, like somebody was walking up and down in there."

"You didn't," gasped Will.

"Who's telling this story, you or I?"

"You're trying to scare me."

"Are you scared?" said Jimmy, hiding a grin.

"No, but——"

"I got up and looked into the cabin, and what do you suppose I saw?"

"I don't know," gurgled Will.

"I saw a rat as big as a house."

"Oh!" ejaculated Will, much relieved. "Only a rat."

"I fired my shoe at it, and it flew out through the passage. Now, when a ship is haunted, the rats always come out of the hold."

"Who told you that?"

"Old Mitchell. He sailed in a haunted bark once, and he told me the story. Want to hear it?"

"Yes."

Jimmy, who had a great imagination, at once improvised a horrible ghost story from various yarns Mitchell had told him at odd times, and by the time he finished he had Will's hair standing on end. Then he started a second one about a sailor who was washed overboard, and whose spirit returned every night to upset the feelings of the crew.

"Did he really come back every night?" said Will.

"He sure did. He came floating up alongside on a hencoop just about this time, and would hail the brig in grave-like tones this way."

Jimmy was about to give an illustration of the dead sailor's voice when suddenly, from over the vessel's quarter, came a hail in sepulchral tones:

"Brig ahoy! Brig ahoy! For the love of heaven, throw a rope!"

The effect on both boys was decidedly startling. Will uttered a howl of fear and turned over on his face. Jimmy, on the contrary, sat up and listened.

"Brig ahoy! Save me, for the love of heaven!" came the hail again.

Jimmy rushed to the rail and looked over. He saw a small boat and a gaunt-looking man standing up in it clinging to the end of a rope hanging over the side. The man, who was looking up, saw him, and cried out again:

"Save me!"

Jimmy picked up a small coil of rope and flung it to the man, the other end being fastened to a ring in the deck. The man caught it in a feeble way and wound it with an effort about his body.

"Pull me aboard," he said. "I'm too weak to climb."

"Will, come here!" shouted Jimmy. "Come here, quick!"

"I don't want anything to do with the ghost," returned his companion.

"It's no ghost, you chump! It's a shipwrecked man. Help me pull him aboard."

Will came and looked over the side. He didn't like the looks of the white-faced man.

"Are you going to take him aboard?" he said.

"What do you want me to do, leave him there? Get hold of the line and haul. Pull like a good fellow. Once more. Now, then, another."

The man's head came up to the rail, and he grasped it like a drowning man catching at a straw. Jimmy reached down and hauled him up

to the rail, and then over it on deck. He rolled over and lay there. Jimmy dashed down into the cabin, stepped on the table and took down the decanter of whisky and a glass. He hurried back to the exhausted man. Pouring some of the liquor into the glass, he put it to the man's lips. The fellow took a mouthful, and it nearly strangled him, but he got it down. He felt revived, sat up and asked for more.

"That goes to the right spot, my hearty," he said, in a hollow voice. "I'm nearly fagged out, but that stuff puts new life into me."

"You're hungry, I suppose?" said Jimmy.

"Hain't had nothin' to eat for a week."

"Go to the pantry and fetch up a cracker and some of the white wine. It won't do for him to eat anything solid for a while," said Jimmy to Will.

Will didn't want to go, but Jimmy said he'd kick him if he didn't, so he went. He stopped on the way to light the cabin lamp, and then he lit the pantry lamp. He returned with a cracker and a cup full of the wine.

"Dip that cracker in the wine and eat it," said Jimmy to the rescued man.

For an exhausted sea wanderer, the fellow, who appeared to be a sailor, came around pretty fast. He sat up, with his back against the rise of the cabin, and stared at the two boys after finishing the cracker and wine.

"I feel a lot better, mateys," he said, "but if I had a reg'lar meal I'd feel better still. Where's the skipper, or the mate on duty? I'm ready to give an account of myself."

"I'm the skipper, and this chap is my chief mate," replied Jimmy. "The regular officers and crew went on a vacation for their health. Anyway, they're not aboard now."

"How did it come about that you two are the only ones aboard?"

Jimmy explained in a few words.

"May I be keelhaunched if that hain't as strange as any yarn I ever listened to. This craft ran away with you the night afore last?"

"Yes."

"And she's been sailin' west ever since?"

"She has."

"At about this gait?"

"She went faster yesterday."

"You've been at sea about forty hours, and if she's averaged twelve miles an hour, we're about 500 miles from the coast. How d'ye s'pose you're goin' to get back?"

"We expected to be rescued by a passing vessel, but now you've turned up, and seem to be a sailor, maybe we can turn around and sail back."

"I'm too weak to do anythin' for a spell. By the time I'm on my pins agin we're likely to be two or three hundred miles further to sea. How's she headin'?"

"The last time I looked at the compass card her course was west, southwest."

"West, sou'west, eh?" said the derelict, reflectively. "How's grub aboard?"

"There's plenty."

"Will it last us three a couple of months?"

"I guess so, but we don't expect to stay aboard as long as that."

"Oh, you don't? Not if it would pay you well to do it?"

"How would it pay us?"

"S'pose I could p'int out how it would? S'pose I could show you how you could fetch home a chest full of gold, would you be willing to stand in with me?"

"I guess you're a bit light in the head yet, my friend."

"Me light in the head! Don't you believe no such nonsense."

"But you're talking nonsense."

"About the gold, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Sonny, I know an island where there's more gold money goin' to waste than you could count in a mouth."

"Get out, you're dreaming."

"All right, matey, we won't say no more about it now, 'cause I hain't is no shape for arguin' the matter. Bring me a couple more crackers, with a piece of meat to go between 'em, and let me have three fingers of that whisky, and then I'll turn into an empty bunk and take a real good snooze. In the mornin' I'll feel better, and we'll talk things over."

They helped the derelict down into the cabin and put him in a chair. Then Jimmy handed him two crackers, with some potted tongue, which he cut up small, between them, and measured out the whisky. After the sailor had put the food and whisky under his waistband, they assisted him into one of the unoccupied berths.

"Thank ye, my lads. It strikes me we'll put together yet. You kin call me to breakfast when you have it ready."

He turned over, and in two minutes was snoring loudly.

CHAPTER VII.—The Story the Sailor Told.

The man from the sea was sleeping soundly when Jimmy turned out on the following morning.

"I wonder how he came to be in that little boat?" the boy asked himself.

Before they turned in the night before both lads had figured on the matter, and the only conclusion they could arrive at, in default of an explanation from the derelict himself, was that he was a survivor from some wreck. The sailor had intimated that he had been a week without food, and he certainly looked pretty well done up. Whether he had been longer than that in the boat was a question yet to be cleared up by the man himself. Jimmy now set about getting breakfast ready. Will soon showed up and set the table for three. By the time he had the table ready, Jimmy had breakfast ready. In addition to the soup for the derelict, and the coffee and fried potatoes for themselves, the boys had some fried ham, some crackers and a pot of marmalade. This spread was laid out, and then Jimmy woke the sailor. He got up without assistance, though he was rocky on his pins, and looked white and debilitated.

"What's this, my hearties?" he asked, looking at the soup.

"Soup. It's for you. You can have some crackers and coffee, too," said Jimmy.

The sailor tasted the soup and declared it was fine.

"Reg'lar cabin stuff," he said. "I guess I'll come around a deal quicker under this here diet. Who's the cook aboard this hooker?"

"I am," said Jimmy. "I'm skipper, cook and half the crew."

"You're a smart kid, matey."

"Sure I am. My mother has told me that fifty times. What's your name?"

"Jim Blaine. What's yours?"

"Jimmy French. My friend's name is Will Larkins."

"Well, Jimmy, is the hooker on the same course?"

"Yes."

"She's bowling along in fine style, eh?"

"Yes. That's the worst of it. We're getting further and further away from California every hour."

"Headin' west sou'west?" said the derelict.

"Yes."

"Good!" ejaculated the sailor, in a tone of satisfaction.

"Good!" cried Jimmy. "What do you say that for? I call it bad for us."

"Don't you believe it matey. We're goin' to keep right on west-sou'west, or about that as near as we kin, and we're goin' to sail back one of these days with gold enough to set us up for our nat'ral lives."

The boys gasped and looked at each other.

"I say, Mister Blaine, what kind of a yarn are you giving us?" said Jimmy.

"Avast with the Mister, my hearties. Call me Jim. I ain't used to havin' no handle spliced on to my name. As to a yarn about that there gold, what I'm tellin' you is a fact."

"How do you know it is?"

"'Cause I had it from a party who seen the treasure."

"If he saw it, why didn't he take it away?"

"'Cause he couldn't. He was wrecked on the island, and he didn't have no means of carryin' it off. When he was took off he intended to go back and get it."

"What prevented him?"

"It was this way: I was aboard the bark that saved him. We put in at the island for fresh water, as our supply had run short, and we found him marooned there."

"Why didn't he take the gold with him when he was saved?"

"He was afraid to let on about it for fear the skipper would claim it and keep most of it, which he might have done. A common sailor ain't got no rights, partic'larly when he's took off an island like that. He and me chummed together on the way back, and he told me all about the gold, and we arranged to go back at the first chance and get it."

"Well?"

"He'd made a chart of the island, which he showed me. It wasn't finished, but he said he could easily add what was missin'. He didn't know the name of the island, nor the latitude and longitude, but he got all that from the chief mate while we was fetchin' the water aboard. He didn't put it down on the chart, but kept it separate on the paper the mate gave him, 'cause he was afraid he might lose the chart which he kept in an old Dutch gin bottle corked up."

Jimmy looked at Will, and Will looked at Jimmy. Was the chart they had picked up in San Francisco Bay the one referred to by the derelict? The description certainly fitted it. If it was, how

came the bottle to be floating there? The boys were interested in learning.

"Did he lose the bottle overboard?" asked Jimmy.

"No, he didn't, but it's lost just the same, and he was lost with it."

"How?"

"Two months after we left the island, when we expected to reach 'Frisco in a couple of weeks or so, we ran into an awful gale. It lasted several days, and when it was over the barky was leakin' so badly that no amount of pumpin' would keep her afloat. So the skipper abandoned her and put off with all hands in two boats. The boat Bill was in with the bottle was the last to put off. I was in the other, fort'nitly. She was in charge of the chief mate. I mean the one Bill was in. Just as they got a length away the mainmast fell over on her without warnin', the boat was smashed and all aboard went down to Davy Jones. We waited 'round for somebody to come up, but nobody did, so at last we pulled away, with that gig I came here in last night towin' astern loaded with grub. We expected to be seen and rescued in a week, but though we seen sev'ral sail, none seen us. So we knocked around more'n a month till the provisions was nearly gone. One misty evenin' we pulled the gig alongside as usual to get our supper, and I was sent into her to hand out some of the stuff. I seen there wasn't enough to last all hands more'n three days, and as the chances of bein' picked up was not good, I didn't fancy the look of things."

The sailor paused and leered at the boys.

"Go on," said Jimmy.

"After I looked the grub over I says to myself that self-preservation was the first law of natur', and that I wouldn't get another chance like the present. The night bein' foggy, if the gig broke loose the others in the long boat wouldn't be able to see where it drifted to. Such bein' the case, I crawled for'ard, whipped out my clasp-knife, and cut the rope as slick as a whistle. The gig drifted off as I expected it would."

The boys looked at Blaine with disgust, with perhaps a stronger feeling as the picture of the long boat, with many men aboard, left without food, rose before their eyes, and all through the treachery of the rascal who was facing them and telling them the plain facts without the least show of remorse.

"That was a mean trick," said Jimmy.

"I'll allow it warn't just right, shipmate, but in a case of that kind it's every man for himself. If somebody else had been sent into the gig he might have done the same. Well, the skipper noticed right away that the gig was gone, and he gave a shout. I heard him orderin' the men to pull around and look for me and the boat. They called out to me, expectin' I'd shout back and guide 'em where to look. But I warn't no sich fool. Havin' done the trick, I warn't goin' to sp'ile it by helpin' 'em to find me. When I didn't answer, I heard the bunch swearin' terribly. I reckon they suspected the truth, and if the skipper looked at the end of the rope, which he probably did, the proof was there. They rowed this way and that in the mist, but it was like huntin' for a needle in a haystack to find the gig in the fog and darkness, and so I got clear off. I was three weeks in that gig, up to last night, and had

finished up every scrap of food, and had about given up hope, when I run foul of this here hooker just in time to save my bacon. So here I am, livin' on the fat of the land with you chaps, on a vessel that's goin' to take us to that there island and fill our pockets with gold money. Then we'll sail back, and you kids kin open a bank, and live like kings for the rest of your nat'ral lives," said the sailor, with a wicked grin.

Jimmy and Will had by this time lost all the satisfaction they had begun to feel in having a real sailor aboard to help them run the brig. They realized that the man was a conscienceless rascal and could not be trusted. Jimmy, however, was curious to learn how the sailor expected to reach the island where he claimed the gold was, since both the chart, with the name of the island, and its latitude and longitude, had apparently gone down with the man who made the alleged discovery, so he put the question to the derelict.

"Nothin' easier, shipmate," grinned the sailor. "I've got the paper the mate handed Bill."

"How did you get it when you say the man went down in the second boat?"

"I hooked it from Bill some days afore. He never missed it. I was afraid he might give me the slip when we reached 'Frisco, so I thought I'd get the jump on him. It was lucky I got it from him, seein' how things turned out. If I hadn't, that would have been the end of the treasure as far as I was concerned."

The sailor leaned back and chuckled, while he looked more wicked than ever.

Will and Jimmy began to fear the man. He was a strong man and they saw he was their master physically. Finally the sailor told the boys he was going to sail the brig in search of the treasure island, and it was up to them to help him, and they would be the richer for the adventure. Jimmy and Will saw they were powerless to stop him, so they fell in with his wishes, and resolved not to thwart him in any way. The sailor appeared to be pleased at having his own way and several days passed without anything occurring out of the ordinary. The man gave the boys lessons in managing the vessel, so that they were becoming quite experts in sailing the brig.

CHAPTER VIII.—Presto, Change—Now You See It, Now You Don't.

Conditions continued favorable for a week, by which time the sailor roughly calculated they had covered 2,500 miles to the southwest. Then the barometer, hanging in the passage, showed signs of a change in the weather. The derelict called the attention of the boys to the dropping of the mercury.

"The weather looks all right," said Jimmy. "There are some more clouds, and the wind feels stronger, that's all I notice."

"The glass never lies," replied the sailor. "Things will be different inside of a few hours. There's a haze along the horizon, and it's likely from the smell of moisture in the air that we'll have rain soon, and with it is likely to come half a gale. You'll have the chance to find your sea legs at last. I reckon I'll have to do most of the

steerin' while the blow lasts, for we can't afford to take no chances."

An hour later the clouds began to obscure the sky. They appeared to gather right out of the firmament, and the brig ere long was enveloped in an impenetrable vapor. The wind was now blowing hard, and the brig dashing along like a race-horse. Jimmy was steering, with the sailor close by, watching the sails where they showed in and out of the mist. The derelict's experienced eye could tell the moment the vessel fell away at all, and then he would call Jimmy's attention to the fact. The water dashed against the brig with that peculiar sullen sighing which betokens a storm. The brig no longer sailed freely, but tossed and dipped to the surges. The sailor watched the glass frequently. He judged that only an ordinary gale was to be apprehended, and that only a part of the sails need be reduced. To take them in under the circumstances was no easy work, for he could only depend on Will's help, and he was only a boy. The foretopsail yard was lowered far enough to enable the sailor to run aloft and clew up a single reef, which he accomplished in short order. The maintopsail yard followed, and he took in a single reef in the sail. Each in turn was lowered further, and another reef taken in them. A third reef followed. Then the sailor reefed the heavy mainsail and foresail. Only a man with iron muscles could have handled the canvas in that wind. He returned to the deck considerably done up and drank half a glassful of whisky. It was now growing dark, and Jimmy, relieved from the wheel, cooked a pot of coffee, and they had supper standing. We will not dwell on the next two days, during which the brig was at the mercy of a stiff gale. She behaved handsomely, and made good progress on her way. Then fine weather came again, much to the relief of the boys.

"We're getting to be regular sailors, Will," said Jimmy when they stood in the galley on the morning after the gale blew out.

"I should say so. Look at my hands. They're hard and blistered. We've got our sea legs now, as the sailor calls it. Just think, we weren't sick at all."

"That's because we've been on the water so much in 'Frisco Bay, and often when it was mighty rough. I was sick once."

Will admitted that he was, too.

"It's fine to see the sun again," he said. "And this wind ain't more than an ordinary one."

"Breakfast is ready. Get busy now and help carry it into the cabin."

The temperature had grown considerably warmer, showing that they were well to the south, just as they knew they were a long distance to the west of the point whence they had started. Inquiry of the sailor developed the opinion on his part that they were about fifteen degrees above the equator, which, if true, would place their position to the south of the Sandwich Islands, and about on a line with the southern part of Mexico. It grew hotter day by day as they proceeded, and as the boys remembered from their geography that there was a group of islands directly south of Hawaii, though how far they did not know, they wondered if they would sight one of them. Jimmy mentioned the fact to the sailor, and he said they would put in at the first land they raised on the horizon. The derelict said he guessed they

ought to sight an island in a week as, in his opinion, they were getting down close to the island they wanted to land at.

That was only guesswork on his part, for he had no more idea of the position of the brig, save that she was approaching the tropical line, than the boys. For the next ten days the wind was light and baffling, and they made slow progress. It was so hot that all hands went about in their undergarments, with bare feet, and passed most of the time under a canvas awning the sailor rigged up to shield them from the direct rays of the sun. The pantry provisions had given out, with the exception of the ham and a few other things, some time since, and they were living on stores procured from the lazaretto, of which there was quite a supply. Three torrid weeks elapsed, and still they hadn't caught sight of land. One afternoon, while the sailor was asleep in a corner, Jimmy drew out the uncompleted chart of the nameless island, and he and Will looked it over again, and figured if it was the island where the gold was supposed to be. Finally they grew sleepy under the heat, and the chart slipped out of Jimmy's fingers. A current of air created by the motion of the brig played with it, and wafted it, little by little, across the poop deck until it dropped down into the space where the wheel was, where there was no breeze, and it lay face upward in the hot sunshine. It soon began to curl up into a roll. Jimmy woke up from his cat-nap and felt thirsty. As he got up he remembered the chart, and looked for it. It wasn't in his pockets, so he looked around on the deck, but couldn't see it.

"Where in thunder did it go?" he asked himself.

Then the suspicion that the sailor had got up while he and Will were snoozing, seen the chart and taken possession of it, struck him. He looked over at the sleeping derelict, but that individual appeared to be dead to the world.

"I don't believe he's got it," Jimmy said.

Then he felt the hot breeze sweeping his bare feet.

"Gracious! I guess it's blown overboard. That's too bad," he said.

He looked down on the after deck and saw the roll in the sun.

"There it is," he ejaculated.

He sprang down and grabbed it. It was almost too hot to handle. Jimmy carried it under the shade and unrolled it, intending to fold it as it was before, as it would lay better in his pocket. While doing so he looked at the sketch. A curious change had come over it. Writing and marks in a reddish hued ink appeared where before had been blank space.

"What's all this?" cried the astonished boy, looking hard at the chart.

Across the middle of the island was written the word "Palmyra," evidently the name of the island. Opposite the word longitude appeared 177 deg., 42 min. W. Opposite the word latitude was 5 deg., 16 min. N. Not far from the word "bluffs" was a circle marked "crater." On a bluff was a roughly drawn palm tree. An index finger pointed to some writing, as follows:

"Stand under palm on bluff, face west in line with sinking sun, as lower edge touches far edge of crater; walk 36 paces straight, find four stakes,

diamond shape, turn and face three cocoanuts on hill to north; walk 16 paces, find four more stakes, face sun, walk straight into crater, find four stakes, diamond shape, 1 yard apart; dig in center and find a treasure chest 4 feet deep."

"Gee!" ejaculated Jimmy, "how did this writing get on this chart with the other marks? I'll swear they were not there before. Nobody could have made the change since we were looking at it a few minutes ago. Some people would say that the chart was bewitched, but of course it isn't. I must show it to Will. Hey, Will, Will, wake up and look here," he called out.

His companion was not so easily aroused. Somebody else was, and that was the sailor. He sat up and said, "What's the matter, matey?"

"Nothing," replied Jimmy, dropping the paper, for he didn't want the derelict to see it. "I was just calling to my friend."

The sailor stretched out his arms lazily and got up. Jimmy stooped, recovered the chart and shoved it into his pocket. Then he went down into the cabin and got a drink of boiled water. An hour later he went to the galley to prepare supper, and there Will joined him. He took the opportunity to tell his friend about the mysterious writing which had come out somehow on the chart.

"The name of the island is Palmyra, and the latitude and longitude is written in in the proper place where it was missing. The treasure is somewhere in a crater, and full directions are given for finding it."

"Let's see," said Will, excitedly.

"Look out and see where the sailor is."

Will looked and said he was on the poop, standing at the wheel looking off toward the horizon. Jimmy then drew out the chart and handed it to his companion. Will opened it eagerly and looked at it.

"Why, what are you talking about? There's no writing on it. It's just as it always was," he said.

"What!" cried Jimmy, snatching it and looking himself.

Will had spoken nothing more than the facts. The name of the island, the latitude and longitude, the tree on the bluffs, the crater circle and all the writing had vanished completely.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" cried Jimmy, staring at it with open mouth.

CHAPTER IX.—Land Ho!

"What kind of game are you giving me?" grinned Will.

"Game! Why, I saw the writing here as plain as I see you," said Jimmy.

"You mean you dreamed you did."

"No, I didn't dream it. I haven't been asleep since I saw it."

Jimmy was thoroughly in earnest, and Will saw he was.

"If you saw it, it ought to be there now," said Will.

"That's what gets me. It isn't here now. I couldn't understand how it came to get there, and I'm just as puzzled to account for it disappearing again."

"Look at the back of it."

"There's nothing on the back."

"Hold it up against the sun."

Jimmy walked to the bulwark and did so, but that did no good.

"I'll give it up," he said, putting it back in his pocket. "Something brought that writing out, but it isn't there now."

The approach of the sailor put an end to their talk on the subject. An hour afterward, while they were seated at the cabin over the remains of the evening meal, Jimmy, who had been thinking, suddenly said:

"I had a funny dream this afternoon, Jim," looking at the sailor.

"What was it, my hearty?" said the derelict, taking out his pipe and charging it with tobacco.

"I dreamed we had reached the island where the treasure is."

"What did it look like?" said the sailor, with a grin.

"Just like any island. It was surrounded by water."

"It wouldn't be an island if it wasn't, sonny."

"It had a couple of coves, a beach, a bluff——"

"Eh?" ejaculated the mariner, looking at Jimmy.

"A grove of bananas, some cocoanut trees, and the name was written on a big board stuck in the sand like an advertising sign."

"What was the name?" said the sailor, striking a match and raising it to the bowl of his pipe.

"Palmyra Island."

Blaine dropped the match and ripped out an oath.

"You've stolen that paper of mine," he cried, fiercely, feeling in his pocket.

"No, I haven't," replied the boy.

The sailor found the paper and looked over it suspiciously.

"You took it out of my pocket and looked at it."

"No, I didn't."

"How did you learn the name of the island, then?"

"Is that really the name?"

"Yes, it's the name. You couldn't have dreamed it."

"But I did, Jim. I saw the name and the island as plain as I see you now."

As the other things that the boy mentioned were not down on the paper, and the derelict knew they applied to the island, he was finally convinced that Jimmy had actually dreamed about the island.

"I once dreamed that I was aboard a brig with two boys about your size, and we was bound after a treasure," said the sailor, grimly. "The boys knew the name of the island, and when we put in at another island I warned them to say nothin' about it. One of them forgot the warnin' and told about the business. I found it out, and when we sailed ag'in the boy accidentally fell overboard and was lost. I hope that dream doesn't come out true."

He looked hard at Jimmy, got up and went on the poop. The boys looked at each other rather solemnly.

"Why did you tell him that yarn?" asked Will. "Now you've got to look out."

"I wanted to test the name of the island I saw on the chart."

"You hit it all right. Gee, but he was mad."

"That proves I saw the writing, doesn't it?"

"Looks like it. Come, let's get the dishes out of the galley."

While they were washing the dishes and pans, Jimmy told Will how the chart got away from him and rolled out in the sun.

"When I picked it up it was curled up and hot as the dickens. When I smoothed it out I saw the writing in a reddish kind of ink."

Will suddenly gave a shout.

"I know! I know!" he cried, excitedly.

"What do you know?" asked Jimmy, looking at him.

"What brought out the writing?"

"The dickens you do."

"The heat of the sun. The writing that doesn't show now is written in with invisible ink that only shows under a strong heat. That's a secret chart. What you see gives no clue to anything. What you don't see until it's brought out by heat is the secret part, showing where the treasure is and how to get it. Don't lose that chart for your life. I'll bet the sailor can't find the treasure to save his neck; but we'll be able to do it if we reach the island."

"Will, I take my hat off to you. You've got more brains than I gave you credit for. You have solved the mystery of the writing. Shake, old man."

"I'm afraid the secret won't do us much good, for the sailor is a stumbling block in our way."

"I'll tell you what we'll do. The sailor is going to put in at the first island with a port we strike to get the bearings of Palmyra Island. We'll give him the slip, hunt up some reliable skipper, show him the chart and make a deal with him. In this way we'll outwit Blaine."

"Oh, you will, will you, you infernal young swab!" roared the sailor, suddenly appearing in the door, near which he had been listening to the conversation of the boys, after creeping upon them unawares, for he had been suspicious of them ever since Jimmy handed him the dream story. "You'll outwit me, will you? You'll go overboard right now."

He sprang on Jimmy, and by main force yanked him out of the galley and began to drag him over to the side of the vessel. The boy hadn't the ghost of a show to save himself, and he shouted for help. Then for the first time in his life Will acted like a man. He knew that unless he interfered his companion was doomed. He seized a heavy frying-pan, rushed after the struggling pair, and brought the article down on Blaine's head with all his might. The sailor dropped like a shot, stunned, on the deck.

"You're a brick, Will," cried Jimmy. "You saved my life."

"What are we going to do with him now? He'll come to presently and he'll murder both of us."

"I'll fix him," said Jimmy.

He got a rope and tied the sailor with it.

"Run into the pantry, light the lantern and fetch it here."

"What are you going to do?" said Will.

"You'll see. Hurry up."

In a few minutes Will fetched the lantern.

"Now help me drag him to the fore-castle."

They carried the sailor forward, and dumped him down the ladder. Jimmy went down with the lantern, and Will followed. They tied the sailor securely to a post, leaving his left arm free, but

Jimmy saw to it that the knots were out of his reach. Then they left their prisoner and closed the scuttle door on him.

"That settles him while we're aboard this vessel," said Jimmy. "He's as dangerous at liberty as a barrel of gunpowder near a bonfire."

The brig was sailing easily along over a rippling sea lighted up by a brilliant galaxy of stars that studded the heavens in all directions. There was just enough wind to keep the sails drawing. The wheel was tied so that she held her course as well as if a man was at the helm. The boys stretched themselves out and talked about the changed situation. It was like the first two days they were afloat by themselves.

"It's a good thing that you took Blaine's knife away from him," said Will; "otherwise he could have reached around and got it with his left hand, and then it wouldn't take the rascal long to get free."

"I thought of that; but in any case he couldn't have got out of the fore-castle. We've got the door caught on him."

"But when we take him his food in the morning—"

"When we do I shall have the revolver with me ready cocked. We can't take any chances with the fellow."

Even with Blaine under hatches and bound, the boys felt a fear of him, so they arranged to stand watches of two hours alternately during the night, and the one on duty was to carry the revolver and stand inside the galley where he could watch the fore-castle hatch. It was along toward morning that Jimmy, who was on watch, suddenly noticed a peculiar sound in the air. It came from the direction the brig was heading. After listening to it a while, during which time it grew louder, he rushed on the fore-castle deck to see if he could find out what caused it. Right ahead he saw a dark blot against the brilliant horizon. He thought it was a ship, but saw no lights, and as far as he could make out it was not moving. Then the truth struck him that it was an island, and the brig was headed directly at it. He ran into the cabin and aroused Will.

"There's land ahead," he said.

"Land!" cried Will.

"An island, and we're running straight on it. We must alter our course."

Jimmy took the lashings off the wheel and pulled it over. There was so little wind that the vessel only responded sluggishly. The sails flapped and she moved broadside on toward the dark object. That wouldn't do, and Jimmy brought her back and turned her the other way, with a like result. The boys soon realized that unless the yards could be braced around, the brig would not clear the island. By this time the noise, which was the roll-call of a light surf on the beach and rocks, had grown very loud to them. Then an idea struck Jimmy.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," he said. "We'll try and get the main yards around, and that might bring the vessel to."

The boys tried to carry this out, but being unfamiliar with the ropes in the dark, they could not pick out the right ones to let go and the others to haul on. The result was the brig sailed on into a big cove and bumped her nose on the beach. Then she swung around and came to rest as easy

as though under the influence of guiding hands. Without knowing it the boys had actually reached the treasure island.

CHAPTER X.—Treasure Island.

"We're up against land at last," said Jimmy. "It's an island, of course, and it is probably inhabited. When morning comes we may look to see the natives flocking to the shore, and there isn't any doubt that they will pay us a visit. I hope they will prove friendly, and that there is a white settlement here, otherwise things are likely to go rough with us."

"It wouldn't be nice for us if the natives proved to be cannibals. We'd be killed and eaten," said Will, nervously.

"There are not so many cannibals now as there used to be before the English got hold of so many islands in these seas. Anyway, I think we're too far north to meet any of those people."

"Why, we must be close to the equator."

"We are, but the cannibals are south of the line, so I have read."

"The Fiji islanders used to be all cannibals, I've heard."

"I guess they were many years ago. The English have converted the larger part of them by the aid of missionaries and force of arms."

As it was close to morning, the boys did not sleep any more. Daylight finally came with tropical suddenness, disclosing a small island to their view. It was a perfect mass of tropical verdure—an emerald set in the ocean. There was very little if any surf inside the broad cove where the brig floated, and not a whole lot outside along the shore for the sea was almost smooth and there was hardly any wind. The tide was low, exposing a goodly stretch of white beach. When it began to flow it would carry the vessel right against the sand. At present she was in about the middle of the cove. With the next flood tide the brig, unless anchored or secured to the shore by a rope, was likely to float out of the cove. The boys didn't know this. Without help they did not expect to get away from the island.

"This is a fine little island," said Jimmy, and he and Will gazed upon the green mass with much pleasure. "I don't see any signs of inhabitants."

"Maybe there aren't any," replied Will.

"I hope there aren't any natives, but it would be much to our interest to find white people."

After a while they went to breakfast, which they prepared and ate in the galley to save time.

"How about Blaine?" said Will, when they had finished.

"I'm not worrying about him. Let him go hungry for a while. He can stand it. He's a big scoundrel, and would do us up if he got the chance. If the boat's crew he abandoned without food perished, as they had a good chance of doing owing to his treachery, he's guilty of wholesale murder. He ought to be punished for it."

"I wish we could get rid of him."

"I'm in favor of carrying him ashore and leaving him on the island."

"That would be all right if we were sure we could get away ourselves; but I don't see how we are going to get out of this cove."

The boys washed up the dishes and then returned to the poop. The brig lay broadside on to the shore.

"Say, let's lower the sailboat and have a look at the island," suggested Will.

"Good scheme," replied Jimmy. "I guess there's enough wind for us to sail around the island, and we'll be able to find out if there is a settlement on it."

Lowering the boat was a picnic beside hoisting it, and they unlashed it and soon had it in the water.

"Who'd ever think that this little craft, built in 'Frico would get all the way over here, several thousand miles from Meiggs Wharf? I guess old Mitchell will never see it again."

"In which case our fathers will have to pay for it, I suppose."

"It isn't worth a great deal, but it's some loss to the old man who earned a part of his bread and butter from it. I've no doubt that long before this we have been given up for dead, and I feel sorry for our folks. We'll get the fatted calf when we turn up one of these days, the heroes of a string of adventures."

"If we do get back," said Will.

"Oh, we'll get back, don't you worry. After going through what we have in safety, the chances are all in our favor."

"Don't shout before you're out of the woods."

"All right. All we need to make a great success of our ocean voyage is to find the gold of the crater. I wish this was the island."

"Suppose it was, we're stuck here unless we put to sea in this sailboat, which would be too much of a fool trick to consider."

While talking, the boys had left the floating brig and were sailing slowly out of the cove. Then Jimmy, who was steering, turned to the left, which happened to be toward the north, and they started to circumnavigate the island. They saw trees in abundance, palms, cocoanuts and others. In about fifteen minutes they sighted a bluff with a single tree on top of it.

"Say, there's a bluff with what looks like a palm tree on it," said Jimmy. "That answers to the bluff in the chart."

"Get out your chart and let the sun bring out the secret writing," said Will. "Hand it to me."

Jimmy passed the paper over, and Will unfolded it and laid it down on the half deck, which was already hot enough to blister one's hands. In a few moments the writing and other marks began to appear, and Will looked at them with great interest.

"The writing is coming out," he said to Jimmy.

It did not take long to bring the secret part of the chart into full view, and the boys looked it over. By this time they had passed the bluffs. Suddenly Jimmy gave a shout.

"There's three trees in a line yonder," he said. "They're on a hill to the north. Gee! Maybe this is the treasure island."

"Heavens! it is we'll surely find the treasure, and then we'll be rich."

"We'll go around the island and see if there's anybody on it, then after dinner we'll go ashore and see if we can find the crater."

"No hurry about that, for the chart says the marks, that is, the stakes, must be looked for about sundown."

"We can look for the crater right away. If we see it we can hang around until sundown, and then follow the directions on the chart."

"All right," nodded Will, handing back the chart.

It took them two hours to go around the island in the light wind that was blowing, and they found a second cove on the side, which corresponded with the marking on the chart.

"If we have really hit the treasure island, it's the only case I ever heard of finding a needle in a haystack," said Jimmy.

"I'd call it a case of pig luck," replied Will.

"The whole of our cruise is a curious combination of luck when you size it up. We start off for a short sail on a sunny afternoon. A bottle comes floating toward us which we pick up. It contains the treasure chart, part of it written in a secret way. We run into a dense fog, float around till we run against the brig. We board her and she carries us off. Two days out we save a big rascal who we find is interested in the treasure. Only we were afraid of him, we might have found a way to return. When we're near to the island, if this island is the treasure one, which I feel sure it is, we discover the secret writing. Then we have a run-in with the sailor and make him prisoner. That gives us the chance to hunt for the gold without being bossed around by him. Doesn't it look as if what teacher calls Fate started us on this adventure, and that we are going to find the treasure?"

Will admitted that things looked that way. When they got back to the cove where the brig was they found her aground and hugging the edge of the beach. They saw by certain marks which had disappeared that the tide had risen several feet.

"When the tide goes out she'll be left high and dry, and over on her side," said Will.

"If she's fast aground she will," returned Jimmy, "otherwise she'll float away from the beach."

"Do you think she'll float out of the cove in that case?"

"She might."

"If we're ashore looking for the treasure she'll get away from us."

"There's a chance of it. To prevent her from getting away we had better get her cable out, if we can, and tie it to one of those trees yonder. If it's too heavy for us to handle, we'll hunt up two long ropes and tie her to two trees."

As there was no rush from the present outlook, they went aboard and got their dinner, then they went to see how the sailor was getting on. He was conscious and still tied. He greeted them with a string of oaths and threats. They paid no attention to his remarks, but offered him his dinner to eat with his free left hand. He ate like a savage, hungry animal, and abused them between mouthfuls. Finally he wanted to know if they were caught in a dead calm, for he had scarcely any motion for several hours.

"No, we've run foul of a small island which appears to be uninhabited, and as there's hardly any wind, we're at a standstill."

At the word island the sailor changed his tune. He promised if they would release him to

let bygones be bygones, and not harm either of them.

"You won't be able to clear the island without my help," he said. "If it should come on to blow the hooker would go ashore and that would be the end of her, and we'd be left marooned on the island, probably to starve."

"We can't trust you, Blaine," said Jimmy. "If Will hadn't come to my aid last evening you'd have thrown me overboard."

The sailor swore he only meant to frighten Jimmy, and had not intended to throw him overboard.

Jimmy wasn't to be hookwinked. He told the derelict he would have to remain where he was until they considered the question of releasing him. Then they left him and started to look up one or two ropes strong enough to hold the brig to the shore. They rigged the ropes to the anchor winch on the forecastle deck and carried the other ends ashore, where they made them fast to the bottom of a couple of stout trees, leaving plenty of slack so the vessel could ride at low water if the ebb tide carried her clear of the beach. It was hot work, and the boys were covered with perspiration when they had finished the job.

"Now we'll start for the bluff and see if the crater is up there according to the chart," said Jimmy, after they had taken a good rest in the shade.

They pushed their way through the dense verdure, and in fifteen minutes came to a banana grove. The ripening fruit attracted their attention, and they were soon filling up on it.

"This must be the banana grove mentioned in the chart," said Jimmy, pulling it out and looking at it.

The secret writing had disappeared as soon as the paper got cold again. The words "banana grove" were written in ordinary ink, and remained. Looking toward the bluff where they could see the top of the palm, the grove seemed to be in the position indicated on the chart.

"This is the treasure island, all right," said Jimmy. "We've found about everything except the crater, and I'd be willing to bet my shirt now that we'll see that when we reach the bluff."

They proceeded on their way over rising ground of a rocky character. They had to go slow and rest frequently in the shade. An hour from the time they left the beach they reached the top of the bluff near the palm trees. Looking in the direction of the setting sun, they distinctly saw a circular rim of rock, uneven in character, rising a short distance away.

"The crater!" shouted Will, in great glee.

Neither doubted now that they were on the treasure island.

CHAPTER XI.—After the Gold.

"Talk about luck," said Jimmy, "we're right in it."

"Bet your life we are. All we've got to do is to follow the directions, dig at the proper spot, and the chest of gold will be ours," said Will.

"Then will come the difficult part of the business—getting it to 'Frisco."

"That's right," said Will, his face falling. "We can't sail the brig back without help, and we certainly can't trust Blaine."

"Well, we won't worry over that yet. We have got to find the gold first."

"The sun is setting fast. As soon as its lower rim touches the edge of the crater we must walk forward straight 36 paces to where we should find four stakes driven into the ground in diamond shape. Then we are to face the three cocoanut trees and walk 16 paces in that direction. After that all we have to do is to walk forward into the crater, and there we will find four stakes a yard apart. In the center of them we are to dig four feet. Look easy."

"Everything is easy when you know how to get around it."

The boys waited till the right moment came, then Jimmy started to measure off the 36 paces in the sun's face, Will following behind him.

"Thirty-one, two, three, four, five, six," cried Jimmy, stopping.

The four stakes were not there.

"Maybe I didn't take long enough steps," said Jimmy. "Look around and see if you can find them."

Will went slowly forward on his hands and knees, with his eyes on the ground, which, owing to its character, was bereft of vegetation. After going a little over three feet, he called out:

"Here they are."

Jimmy rushed forward and saw the tops of four pieces of wood, driven at angles corresponding to a diamond, even with the ground.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "Now for the next stage of the game."

He took longer strides this time and landed close to another set of stakes. Then he walked straight for the crater. It was broken away at that point, affording easy entrance. As Jimmy stepped in, a native, naked, with the exception of a breech-cloth, sprang up and faced the two boys. The encounter was a surprise to both. The native commenced to jabber in an unknown tongue. His attitude, however, appeared to be friendly, judging from the expression on his dark brown countenance.

"Who are you?" cried Jimmy.

"Me, Volo," replied the native, in a guttural tone. "You English, eh?"

"No, we're American."

"American? Same like English. Me understand your language."

"You live on this island," said Jimmy, in a tone that indicated he took the fact for granted.

"No, no, no!" cried the native, energetically. "No live here. Come ashore in heap big wind. Canoe upset. Me only save life."

"That so? How long you been on the island?"

"How long? No remember. Moon come two times."

"I guess he means about two months," said Will.

"Anybody else on this island?"

The native shook his head.

"Me alone. When you come?"

"This morning—sunrise."

"Where you ship?"

Jimmy pointed toward the cove.

"Maybe take Volo way to place where he get back to him island."

"Where is your island?"

The native pointed to the southwest.

"How far from here?"

"Long way. No able count. Volo much stupid. Him wish knew more—make medicine man then. Live fat. No work."

"What are you doing here in crater?"

"Come here cook bread fruit. Much hot like fire. Save strike light."

"I don't see any fire," said Jimmy, stepping forward and looking down into the abyss.

It wasn't fire, but hot gas which came up through the opening. The fumes of the gas ascended from the crater and was breathed by Jimmy. He uttered a cry as he felt his senses leaving him, staggered back, and would have fallen had not Will and the native seized his arms. They dragged him back from the edge of the pit, and he fell forward on his face, unconscious. Will was greatly alarmed, but the native reassured him.

"Heat much bad when go too near. Me smell once. Fall down like him. By and by come to. No kill."

Will was glad to hear it. The native explained that he brought bread fruit there every few days, stuck it on the end of a stick and held it over the hot gas, which he called invisible fire, until it was cooked, then carried it away to a small cave where he slept, and ate it. In a short time Jimmy recovered his senses, and was conscious of no bad effects from the poisonous gas. With some caution he looked around for the four stakes, buried a yard apart, in the form of a diamond, and found them.

"It will be dark in a few minutes," he said to Will. "The only thing we can do is to take note of this spot so we will know it again."

As there were other broken pieces in the rim of the crater, they piled up a heap of stuff that resembled pumice stone, and were ready to return to the brig. They invited the native to accompany them. On the way to the shore they told the native that they were the only persons on the vessel, except a sailor who was a very bad man and wanted to kill them. They had tied him up in the hold. They asked the native if he would help them sail the vessel to the nearest inhabited island where there were white people.

"Me do anything to get away from island," he answered.

They took him aboard the brig and treated him to a regular supper. He appeared to be hugely delighted with the food. He said he had lived on shell fish, bananas, bread fruit and cocoanuts. From his looks he had not suffered any. He sat with the boys for two hours on the poop, and they got to understand his disjointed English pretty well. He was told to sleep in one of the bunks, and he acted as though he was not accustomed to such a princely luxury, but he didn't object to making use of the bunk, and in a short time was sound asleep. Then the boys carried Blaine's supper to him, and they found the sailor in a villainous humor. He wanted to be released at once, and as Jimmy declined to accede to his request, he swore he'd get free and then there would be something doing. At

breakfast next morning Jimmy told Volo that there was something buried in the crater that he and Will were going to dig for. The native was curious to know what it was. As they knew they couldn't prevent him from learning the truth if the chest of gold was really in the crater, they told him what they believed the contents of the box consisted of.

He promised to help them dig for it, and transfer it to the brig. The boys found a shovel and a sharp piece of iron with which to loosen the top covering of pumice stone, and also provided themselves with three bags. Before leaving the brig they gave the sailor his breakfast. This time he was sullen and silent, but there was a wicked glint in his eyes which did not speak well for what was passing in his mind. There was a strong wind that morning blowing off shore, and as most of the brig's sails were set, she strained hard at her mooring ropes, and the boys looked anxiously at the two trees, wondering if they would hold her.

"We ought to get out another rope," said Jimmy.

"There isn't any rope long enough to reach to another tree," said Will. "Those are the only trees near enough to be of use."

"I wish we could get the anchor down."

"We couldn't handle it to save our lives."

"Then we must try and get some of the sail off her. I don't think those trees are going to stand the strain."

"I've got a better idea."

"What is it?"

"The wind is blowing from fore to aft along the brig."

"Well?"

"It will be quicker for us, with the Indian's help, to slew the yards around so that they point toward the wind. That will take the force of it out of the canvas. See the idea?"

"Yes. We'll do that."

It took the three some time to work the yards on the two masts around, as they were far from being experts at such business, but they succeeded at last, and the strain on the two trees was greatly lessened. The boys believed the brig would hold now, after putting what they wanted into the sailboat, together with a good lunch, for they hardly expected to get back by midday, they pushed the boat to the beach with an oar, and driving the oar into the sand, tied the painter to it. The two treasure hunters and their copper-skinned companion then started for the bluff. Arriving at the palm, Jimmy proceeded to measure off the requisite number of paces in the direction he judged he had followed the previous afternoon, but he did not strike the stakes. He and Will then started to hunt for them, but after closely examining quite a bit of the ground, they could not find them.

"Oh, what's the use of wasting any more time. Let's go over to the crater! We are sure to find the four stakes there," said Jimmy.

They went, but were baffled again—they could not find the stakes.

"One would think those stakes had the power of disappearing like the writing on the chart," said Jimmy, impatiently.

"I'm afraid we'll have to give up till sun-

down. We can't find even the pile of stone we fixed up."

Jimmy tried to explain the trouble to Volo.

"Do you remember where we met you yesterday?" he asked.

The native pointed.

"Good. Take us there."

Volo guided them directly to the spot, and the first thing they saw was the pile of pumice stone. Then they entered the crater and, after a short hunt, located the four stakes. Jimmy handed the pointed iron to the native, and told him to loosen up the stuff within the stakes. He set to work, while the boys sat in the shade and watched him.

"We'll soon know whether the treasure is there," said Jimmy.

"It's there, I'll bet a dollar," said Will, and Jimmy shared the same idea.

CHAPTER XII.—Conclusion.

After the native had loosened the surface up, Jimmy handed him the shovel and told him to dig. Volo having been accustomed all his life to a hot sun, did not find the labor as hard as the boys would. He dug away for an hour and had made good progress when Jimmy took a hand at it. He worked till he was tired, and handed the shovel to Will. When Will gave up, the native started in again. By this time the hole was about three feet deep, and only a foot more remained to test the truth of the secret chart. It was close to noon when Volo met with an obstruction.

"Something in hole," he said.

"Hurrah!" shouted Jimmy. "It's the chest."

A little more digging and scraping away of the loose pumice stone revealed a portion of the lid of a sea chest.

"Suppose there shouldn't be anything in it?" said Will.

"Do you think any one would take the trouble to bury a sea chest up here just for fun?"

"No; but the parties who buried the gold originally might have come after it later and taken it away. They wouldn't leave it here indefinitely."

Jimmy had to admit that there was a possibility of such a thing having taken place, in which event their hunt would end in keen disappointment.

"We'll soon find out whether it's been removed or not," he said.

"I'll have a fit if it has," said Will.

After clearing the top of the chest, and some inches around the sides, they saw that the cover was secured by a stout padlock.

"The gold is still there," said Jimmy. "If it had been taken away the chest wouldn't have been locked again. We'll stop to eat, and then finish the job."

They sat down under the shade cast by a grove of low trees and proceeded to eat dinner.

"Gee! It's blowing harder than when we left the brig," said Jimmy.

"Maybe not. We're higher up here and feel it more," said Will.

Looking over the island, they could see the trees bending over under the force of the wind, which was blowing a small gale. At the same time the sky was clear and the sun almost as hot as ever. They finished their dinner, and soon afterward the native resumed digging around the chest. Finally about half of it was exposed and, taking the pointed iron, Jimmy inserted it under the heavy hasp, and the three using their united strength, broke it off. The lid of the chest was then raised, and a piece of bunting was found covering its contents. Jimmy pulled it off and shook it out to see what nationality it belonged to. It proved to be of solid black cloth, ornamented with a rude skull and cross bones—a regular pirate ensign.

"Gee! It's a pirate flag!" cried the boy. "That shows this is a pirate's treasure."

Underneath the flag lay a suit of clothes, with a red sash. Removing these, a cutless, a fancy dagger, a pair of silver mounted pistols of out-of-date design, and a number of other articles lay on top of a folded piece of canvas. Eager to reach the expected gold, the boys paid little attention to these curiosities, which were speedily thrown out. The canvas formed the lining of what was below, and it was folded back. Another piece of canvas lay underneath.

"We'll get to the treasure after a while," said Jimmy.

Throwing the canvas aside, they saw numerous small, fat bags, tied at the mouth and showing a dab of sealing wax stamped with a Spanish emblem. This was evidently the gold, and the boys shouted with joy on finding it. Jimmy yanked a bag out with some trouble, for they were closely packed, and held it up. The impress of coins could be seen through the stout cloth.

"Cut it open," said Will.

"No," said Jimmy, "not till we get the stuff aboard. It's sure money. Anybody can see that."

Will took the bag and weighed it.

"It's heavy, isn't it? We won't be able to carry more than four of these apiece. It will take several trips to get it to the shore."

"We'll carry it all over to the palm tree first and pile it up there."

Twelve bags were taken out, and each taking four, the procession started for the tree. Leaving them under the tree, they went back and carried the remaining twelve in sight. When they returned to the chest, Jimmy tossed out another piece of canvas, expecting to find more bags underneath, but was disappointed. There was nothing but a lot of clothes. The twenty bags constituted the whole of the treasure.

"I wonder how much it amounts to?" said Will.

"When we get aboard we'll count it. Pick up those pistols and the cutlass. I'll take this dagger, the sewing-kit, and the red cap. You, Volo, fetch the clothes with the sash," said Jimmy.

This stuff was carried to the foot of the palm.

"Now we'll carry a load of the gold to the cove, and then come back for the rest," said Jimmy.

At that moment Will uttered a cry of consternation.

"Look! Look! There goes the brig out to

sea! She broke away. Now what are we going to do? This wind will carry her clean out of sight, and we'll never see her again," cried Will.

"Gee! that's tough!" cried Jimmy. "Hello! there's the sailor at the wheel trying to work her around. He made his escape from the fore-castle. The brig might as well go after that. If Blaine ever saw this gold he'd want most of it."

"Maybe our sailboat is gone, too," said Will.

"We'd better go and see. I hope it's safe, though we can hardly venture to sea in such a small craft," said Jimmy.

The gold was abandoned for the time, and the party started for the cove. They found the sailboat safe enough, for she presented little surface for the wind to play on, and though the tide was tugging at her, the oars to which she was tied were well imbedded in the sand. Both trees to which the brig was attached had been torn up by the roots, and they were gone, two holes alone showing where they had been. By this time the vessel was nearly a mile from the island, and rapidly widening the distance. She would probably be out of sight before dark. The boys felt that they were marooned on the treasure island, and would have to live on the same diet the native had subsisted on since he was wrecked there. They stood watching the receding brig for some time, and then they returned to the bluff. They brought the gold and other things to the cove, and wound up by getting the empty chest out and fetching that, too, as Jimmy said they needed it to keep the gold in. On their last trip they could no longer see the brig from the top of the bluff, and they wondered how the sailor would get along all by himself. They didn't worry about him for his fate was a matter of indifference to them. They sincerely hoped they never would see him again. It blew hard all night. The boys took refuge with Volo in the little cave in the center of the island, and their supper consisted of cooked bread fruit, not very palatable to them, cocoanut milk and bananas. There was a strong breeze next morning, but this calmed down, till at sunset a dead calm prevailed. Two weeks passed without incident, and then at sunset one day a smart looking steam yacht, flying the American flag, was discovered by Jimmy from the bluff coming toward the island from the west. He rushed back to the cave and notified Will and Volo. They accompanied him back to the bluff. The yacht evidently intended stopping at the island for some reason, and the boys judged she would run into the second cove on the western side of the island. They and Volo hurried over in that direction. They reached the beach just as the yacht swung to her anchor in the cove. Darkness fell and she blazed up with light. The party waited for a boat to come ashore, but none came. Growing impatient, Jimmy suggested that they go to the other cove, where their boat was, and sail around to the yacht.

Half an hour later the sailboat ran alongside the yacht, much to the surprise of the people on deck. Jimmy and Will stepped aboard, leaving Volo in the boat. They were received by the owner and his sailing-master. The owner proved to be a California millionaire, returning from

a lengthy cruise through the Orient. The yacht had run short of fresh water, and she had put in at the island to renew her supply. As soon as the boys stated that they were natives of San Francisco, and had been carried off from their State against their will, they were warmly welcomed, and assured of a safe return. Dinner being ready, they were invited to partake of it, and Volo was sent forward to eat with the crew. It was a wonderful story that Jimmy told at the dinner table after he had satisfied his hunger with the good things served up. He omitted the facts about the treasure till later, when he took the owner privately into his confidence. That gentleman was very much astonished to learn that the boys had unearthed a pirate's treasure of considerable value. He promised to take it aboard after the yacht had got in the water. The boys and Volo passed the night aboard the yacht. The necessary water was brought aboard during the next forenoon, and then the yacht changed her anchorage to the other cove, where the chest was taken on and stowed in a safe place.

Jimmy asked the owner if it would be too much trouble for him to carry Volo to his island, as he didn't want to be taken to California. On interrogating the native, the name of his island was ascertained by the sailing-master. The chart showed that it was something over 100 miles to the southwest. The owner agreed to run there and land him. This was done to the native's great satisfaction. On parting with him, Jimmy gave him one of the bags of gold, estimated to contain \$10,000, as a reward for his services, and this made him rich for the rest of his life. The yacht was then headed for San Francisco, and passed the Golden Gate a week later, after a fast and pleasant trip. The boys and the chest of gold were landed. When they turned up at their homes they were welcomed as from the grave, for they had long since been given up for dead.

Naturally, there was high jinks at both houses, and all the neighbors came to see the boys who had been carried off thousands of miles in an abandoned brig. The pirate treasure excited the most intense interest. It proved to foot up nearly \$250,000. Of course, the newspapers got wind of everything, interviewed the boys, and printed a graphic story of their adventures. Jimmy and Will learned that the boat's complement of officers and men deserted by Jim Blaine in so heartless a way, had been saved on the day following his dastardly act, and had been brought to San Francisco. Blaine and the brig were never heard of again, and the inference was both had gone to the bottom—a fitting fate for the rascal himself. The golden treasure of the crater was deposited in a big bank and invested afterward for the benefit of the lads by their fathers. To-day both of them are capitalists in San Francisco, and sport the gray hairs of fifty-six or seven years. Hanging in Jimmy's handsome home on Pacific avenue is a framed design that he values as his choicest possession—it is the secret chart.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BOY BEHIND THE DEALS; or, THE LUCK OF A WALL STREET BROKER."

CURRENT NEWS

9,000 GALLONS OF BEER GO.

More than 9,000 gallons of pre-war beer, confiscated by dry agents in raids in Atlantic City and Jersey City, were emptied into the street at Newark recently. Deputy United States Marshal Zipf, acting on an order signed by Federal Judge Rellstab, directed the operations of destroying the beer, which was emptied through a vent in the floor of the Eagle Warehouse in Hayes street.

STAMP AT 12,500,000 MARKS

Germany's most expensive postage stamp valued at 12,500,000 marks, is being shown in an exhibition in Berlin. It is a German stamp sent from China by Lieut. Eric von Salzmänn, while serving with the international forces in the Boxer uprising, and has the word "China" printed on it by hand. The stamp is the only one of its kind in existence. Von Salzmänn was also newspaper correspondent at the time the stamp was sent.

CIGARETTE COST 1,000,000 RUBLES

The Bolshevik ruble has been fluctuating to such an extent that dealers often raise the price of articles billions of rubles over night. These

are chiefly diamonds, gold and platinum jewelry, furs and other luxuries sought by speculators, the quad-rillionaires and others with loads of the Soviet paper cash.

One day the ruble dropped to 35,000,000 to the dollar, and two days later rose again to 27,000,000, where it remained "stabilized" for several weeks. During this period Moscow street car fares were increased from 500,000 rubles to 1,000,000. American made cigarettes cost 1,000,000 Soviet rubles each.

NEW DIAMOND FIELD FOUND

Diamonds have been discovered at Brownsweeg, about eighty miles from Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana, according to the members of a local syndicate, whose prospectors have just brought in seven stones after a search of only a few weeks.

The district in which the diamonds were uncovered has yielded gold for the last forty-seven years, but no systematic search for precious stones has heretofore been conducted. The place is easily reached by rail from Paramaribo and a rush of diamond seekers is expected.



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Held Down By Poverty

— OR —

A POOR BOY'S STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XIII—(continued.)

"Why, yes, I must say that I have," he slowly responded. "In fact, I regard him as a sort of manager for me, and have always looked upon him as my right-hand man. My confidence in him has been such that had I needed a partner in my business, I certainly should have taken him in and given him a small interest."

"Well, sir," said Harry, "you may smile at me, for I know that I am only a boy and know very little about business, but from the moment I was introduced to that man I distrusted him. If he is all right, that is, if he is an honest man and devoted to your interest, then I shall never again trust to an impression concerning anybody."

Mr. Crossman looked troubled.

"Well," he slowly said, "some persons have that gift of being correctly impressed with character at sight, and so I am not going to laugh at you my boy, but I must say that up to the present time I have never found him doing anything wrong."

"Have you ever looked for it?" shrewdly asked the boy.

"Evidence of wrongdoing?"

"Yes, sir."

"No, I have not."

"Then, sir, if you will pardon me for saying so, it is a blind trust. Don't think me forward, Mr. Crossman, but remember that you told me to always speak out if I thought anything was wrong."

"That's correct," said the merchant. "Free your mind."

"Well, sir, and what is your opinion of Barrett?"

"I have always regarded him as faithful and honest."

"Well, Mr. Crossman," earnestly said the boy, "I have confidence in my eyesight, which is usually good, and I say to you that the typewritten order from Morton & Gray was perfectly legible when I picked it up from the floor, and that the blurring of the number which made it difficult to read without a magnifying-glass, must have been done by either the bookkeeper or the porter, for what reason you can imagine."

"Furthermore, I was waylaid last night on my way home by a gang of rascals who beat me up as you can see, and would have kicked in my ribs and put me in the hospital with a chance of death facing me, had I not fought them off until the arrival of the police."

"That gang numbers among its membership the tough Marty who tried to trip me up when I was running after Bill Strong, and you will recall that I saw some sort of signals between

Strong and Marty when I was coming back on the express wagon."

"When I came into this place this morning my appearance created surprise on the part of Jackson and the other clerks, just as it did with you when you looked at me a moment ago when I walked in, but the expression I caught on the faces of both the porter and the bookkeeper was something more than that, and I feel confident that they were struck speechless with surprise to see me enter the establishment. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind, sir, that either one or both of those men caused the attack on me because I am watching and suspicious, and see too much that is going on."

Mr. Crossman looked grave.

He thought the matter over deeply for a moment.

"This is a very grave charge that you make," he slowly said, "but you may be right in your ideas. For the present, of course, you have only your suspicions and I cannot take any action on those, alone, but keep your eyes open as you have done, and at the same time try to do so without arousing suspicion, and if you are correct in your conjectures something will turn up to prove them. At the same time, if you are right, you must not forget that you are in danger from this gang. What measures will you take to protect yourself?"

"I can only keep my eyes open for danger, and be on my guard wherever I go, sir," said Harry. "So far I have been lucky."

"Well, after their assault on you last night the rascals will know that you are on the alert," said the merchant, "and may hold off for a time, and so give you an opportunity to find out some things that will confirm your suspicions. You have astonished me, Harry, I will admit, but I can see that you are very faithful to my interests, and now that you have told me what you think I shall also be on the watch. By the way, I shall start you at twelve dollars a week, and there is no doubt in my mind that you can earn that sum, and that it will not be long before you will deserve to be raised."

Harry thanked him warmly, and left the office, his heart swelling at the thought that he would soon be able to move his mother into more comfortable quarters and to relieve her of the drudgery of heavy sewing.

Our hero had scarcely entered Mr. Crossman's office, when Griggs caught the eye of the porter, and the latter came up to the desk.

"He's here again," said Barrett.

"So I see," growled Griggs. "You could have knocked me down with a feather when he walked in this morning, and yet it's perfectly plain that the gang must have tackled him."

"Yes, he's all marked up."

"I can't understand it. Take this package down to Browning & May, and on the way there keep your eyes open for one of the boys. I want to know just how he got off without going to the hospital."

The porter nodded, picked up the package, put on his hat, and walked out of the place.

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

BOY FIGHTS GIANT HAWK

Hans Klingerman, a boy of 7, son of a forester near Cuxhaven, Germany, battled for half an hour with a giant hawk which attacked his eight-year-old sister in a lonely part of the woods. The children were on their way to school early in the morning, before it was quite light, when the bird swooped down and seized the girl.

The boy fought the hawk with a club, and in spite of serious injuries had stunned it when his father, attracted by the children's screams arrived and killed it.

WOLVES DEVOUR THREE MEN

A roving band of hungry timber wolves has devoured three men, according to reports from the snow covered trails of the Sturgeon River country Ontario, telling of a losing battle fought by two Indians after a white trapper had been downed and killed. The Indians found a spot in the woods where on the bloody pounded snow were bits of dogs' harness belonging to the trapper and human bones. They followed the trail and failed to return. A searching party found another patch trodden in the snow, with much more blood—about two miles beyond the first. The two guns the Indians had carried were lying in the crimsoned snow. Scattered about were bones and bits of clothing. The carcasses of sixteen dead wolves—some half eaten—lay stretched in a circle.

WOLVES DEVOUR THREE MEN

Nathan Behrin, an official stenographer in New York County Supreme Court, who has been national shorthand champion for five years, was announced winner of speed contests the other day at the end of the convention of the New York State Shorthand Reporters Association.

Behrin in a new record took 350 words a minute for two minutes, making three errors, breaking his own mark of 277 words a minute. Neale Ransob of the District Court in Jersey City was second with six errors; Jerome Victory, former national champion, made eleven mistakes, and Daly had fourteen errors.

In a contest in which material was read at the rate of 300 words a minute Behrin made seven errors. John F. Daly of the Court of General Sessions made twenty-seven mistakes. At 325 words a minute Behrin and Raymond Martin, a Supreme Court stenographer, made three errors.

VOICES GO THROUGH FOUR FEET OF CONCRETE

A new device which makes it possible to direct radio through walls of steel and concrete was demonstrated recently in the Grand Central Palace, where the American Radio Exposition is being held. Standing with his device behind a wall four feet thick, Bernays Johnson, the inventor,

directed his voice through the obstruction, spectators on the other side hearing the words with ease. Next he closeted himself in a steel case, and again sent his voice to the outer world.

Mr. Johnson said his radiophone was a radical departure from the present type, in that it contained no elaborate motive generators large power tubes. The motive power was furnished by a small dry cell battery. He said with apparatus it was possible to communicate selectively with any number of stations.

The radiophone not only transmits and receives the voice with clearness, but it is equipped with a bell ringing device which rings when the party is desired. Johnson told how he had talked down to miners in a coal mine.

Another feature of the program of the exposition was a demonstration of the talking movies. A film which showed the operation of the radium vacuum tube, and which was accompanied by a talk explaining the operation, was flashed on the screen. The production of the record was kept in step with the film by a synchronizing device.

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A Successful Ruse

By COL. RALPH FENTON

I was journeying through one of the Southern States, and was the guest of one of Virginia's wealthiest gentlemen, when an event occurred that held my steps for a time, and led me into investigating one of the most terrible tragedies that has even darkened the annals of the Old Dominion.

I was the guest of Tremont Edford.

He was the scion of an ancient family, belonging, in fact, to one of the oldest of the F. F. V.'s. I never met the gentleman until my present visit, but he had met my father, and meeting by accident on one of Richmond's streets, I was at once pressed to make Edford's beautiful home my own during my stay in the capital city.

Of course I accepted. I was off duty, anyhow, and could do as I liked; and thus it was that I became an actor in the interesting events I am about to relate.

Riverside was a beautiful home, indeed—ancient in its appearance, yet full of modern beauties, that served to drive away the shadows and dust of the ages gone.

Tremont Edford had two children—North, a stalwart young man of twenty, with his father's eyes and complexion; and Aimee, a bright-eyed, golden-haired girl of seventeen. I learned afterward that the girl was Edford's brother's only child, left to his care when that brother died of an old wound that had been inflicted just before the downfall of the Confederacy. The event of this brother's death was some five years before my visit to Riverside.

Although young, apparently enjoying the best of health, surrounded by everything calculated to make one supremely happy, Aimee yet seemed anything but contented with her lot.

"Heavens! Colonel Sharp, come here quickly!"

It was the startled, tremulous voice of Tremont Edford that shot into my ears from the open door of my room. I had been writing, and I glanced at my watch as I rose to my feet. The hour was midnight.

Walking forward, I looked into a white face, so full of startled horror as to impress me strongly. I realized that something of a terrible nature had happened.

I followed the master of Riverside down a long hall without a word. Soon we came to an open door. Pushing his way in, Edford paused near the center of the room.

Something of a terrible nature caught my eye. Tremont Edford was bending over something on the carpet.

The room was but dimly lighted, yet I caught the glimmer of golden hair, and instantly realized what was there. With a quick stride I was at the side of Edford, and bending over the silent form on the carpet—the form of Aimee with a dagger hilt standing above her breast.

The blue eyes were open and glassy, filled with a terror not to be mistaken.

"Tell me, is she dead, colonel?"

"She is dead," I answered, awed at the awful nature of the young girl's taking off. "What do you know about this, Mr. Edford?"

"Nothing. It is an unexpected horror to me," answered the Virginian, in a husky voice.

"Bring a light," I commanded, all my old coolness returning suddenly. I held my wits about me, and was anxious to investigate.

The light was brought, and the investigation I made brought to light what seemed to be a case of suicide. The right hand of the maiden was blood-stained, evidently having been in contact with the wound. In the left hand a bit of paper was found clutched in a death-grip that was difficult to unloose.

I did succeed, however, and soon had the paper outspread under my gaze. I give the contents here:

"It is useless, dear George. I cannot leave my friends, and yet it is hard to give you up. I am unhappy and desperate. There is but one way to end it all. I will take my own life, and then—oblivion. You, dear George, know what my troubles are. You will forgive me; for the others I care not. I have the dagger, and the house is quiet. Farewell—farewell. AIMEE."

The master of Riverside reached out for the paper.

"Permit me to keep it, please."

"Certainly, if you wish," answered Mr. Edford.

There was a sad story connected with the poor dead child, I knew. I questioned the master regarding the person called George in the suicide's note.

"It must be that she referred to George Curtain. He's only a mechanic, and I never saw much of him, and never cared to. I don't think there was any intimacy between the fellow and Aimee. North would have married his cousin had she lived."

This ended the conversation at that time. Edford seemed too deeply shocked to speak further. Other members of the household were roused, throughout Riverside.

An inquest followed as a matter of course. Verdict, "suicide." I was not fully satisfied. I scarcely doubted the righteousness of the verdict, but what had driven a beautiful young creature like Aimee Edford to self-destruction? Something out of the ordinary, certainly.

I still tarried at Riverside after the funeral of the poor girl, and was afterward glad that I did so.

One morning as I was strolling under the trees on the lawn, smoking a cigar and meditating, a stranger paused at the fence, leaned against the pickets, and fixed his gaze intently on my face. I did not relish this, naturally, and at once approached and bade the fellow good-morning.

"You are the gentleman who's been stopping at Riverside lately—Mr. Sharp?"

The man, who was young, and not unintelligent looking, uttered the sentence in low, yet hurried tones.

"I am Mr. Sharp," I said.

"And a detective?"

"Sometimes——"

"I know; Aimee told me. I am George Cur-

tain. I loved her, and but for a villain we would have been wed. Do you know, if the poor child did take her life, Tremont Edford drove her to it."

"This is rough talk. I am a guest here——"

"And will not listen to the truth about your host. I could tell a mighty strange story. This property was Miss Edford's; it is now her uncle's."

"I would like to hear the story, Mr. Curtain," I said in a mollified tone.

After glancing sharply about, and seeing no one, the young man gave me the story.

"So you see, sir, Aimee was not well used by her relatives, and it was for his interest to get her out of the way, since she positively refused to become the wife of her cousin North. I don't say there was foul play, Mr. Sharp, but I don't believe the old gent is any too good to do a mean thing if he should get the notion into his head. I mean to investigate, anyhow."

From that hour I regarded the master of Riverside with aversion. I had looked at a side of his character as revealed by George Curtain that before was an unrevealed page. Aimee had been left a solemn trust to his keeping, and he had used his influence to bend the girl to his wishes—to wed his son North. I noticed that Tremont Edford's sorrow at his fair ward's death was short-lived. Within a week he was spending money at places of questionable resort, and carrying himself in anything but a becoming manner, so soon after what should have been a great bereavement.

In order to carry out my plans, I fell in with his mood, and was a companion on some of his visits to the low places of the city. When in wine, Mr. Edford was often very communicative.

As may be supposed, Tremont Edford did not rise in my estimation on account of his conversation and actions while in liquor.

"Of one thing I am convinced," said Curtain one morning, as we stood together under a tree not far from Riverside.

"What is that?"

"North Edford had no hand in his cousin's destruction. I will give him credit for possessing a heart. I have seen enough to convince me that he deprecates his father's late shameful course, and would prevent it if he could."

"I believe the time has come to strike, George," said I. "I do not believe we shall ever get any direct evidence on this case. If Aimee was murdered, no one in the world save herself and assassin witnessed the deed. Now, there is but one living witness to the affair—the assassin himself. How can he be convicted?"

"It seems to be a bad case, Mr. Sharp."

"It is. But one way remains—the murderer must make a confession."

"He will not be likely to do that."

"That remains to be seen. You were acquainted with the former owner of Riverside?"

"I have seen him many times."

I then went on and laid my plan in completeness before the young mechanic. He listened attentively, and approved of it at the end.

"I am very much afraid it will not work, yet it is, perhaps, the only way," said George Curtain, after a brief reflection. "When will you try the experiment?"

"To-night."

"Very good. I will be on hand to render what assistance I can."

I had learned much of the habits of Tremont Edford during my few weeks' sojourn at Riverside. I made the discovery that the grand room, with its high ceiling and picture-hung walls, where the tragedy had occurred, was a place of nightly resort for the master, whether drunk or sober. He occupied the room alone, and never permitted visitors. This singular edict was a help to me in my plans.

The night in question proved to be a stormy one—another favorable omen. Thunder boomed along the black vault of heaven, and ten thousand gleams of electricity seemed to dart at once in zig-zag course across the clouds.

North had retired when his father returned from the city in a covered carriage. The hour was late—nearly midnight, and when the master of Riverside crossed the threshold and shook the rain-drops from his greatcoat, his face looked pallid and drawn in the lamplight. His step was unsteady, indicating that he had made a day of it in Richmond.

In a little time, through the assistance of a colored servant, he was comfortably ensconced in an arm-chair, in dressing-gown and slippers, a glowing fire before him, a glass of hot whisky at his right hand.

After sipping this Edford rose to his feet, lighted a candle, and entered the hall. In a little time he crossed the threshold of the art room.

He had crossed half the carpet, one foot already touching a stained spot in the carpet made by the dead girl's blood, and then—— Tremont Edford started back with a gasping cry, and his candle fell with a thud from his nerveless fingers.

A tremendous crash of thunder shook the old house. A white glare filled the room. Confronting Edford stood a tall, ghostly figure, with glazed, dead eyes staring from a pallid face directly into his.

"Heavens! Brother Norman!" welled from Edford's pallid lips, and then he cowered almost to the floor, completely paralyzed with fear.

"Aye!" uttered the ghost, in hollow accents. "I am here to demand my child. Where is she?"

Lower and lower cowered the master of Riverside. He was on his knees now, with livid face upturned, and hands clasped imploringly.

"Her blood is here! it will not wash out; you, Tremont, have murdered Aimee!"

A gurgling groan. Then:

"I did. I confess; but we quarreled and I struck harder than I meant. Have mercy!"

The confession had come. It was all I wanted, and I at once cast off my weird disguise and told George Curtain to come forward. The young man quickly obeyed, carrying in his hand a dark lantern which he had used for the occasion.

Turning the rays on the master's face revealed the fact that he lay insensible, with froth oozing from his lips. The ghostly visitor had indeed done its work effectually.

Tremont Edford recovered from the first fit, but the moment reason dawned he realized that he was doomed. His room was guarded while he lay on a sickbed, but the precaution proved an unnecessary one, since he cheated the gallows by dying in bed in a most horrible manner.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 2, 1923.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

ANOTHER COUNTERFEIT FOUND IN CIRCULATION

The appearance of a new counterfeit \$20 National Bank note is announced in a letter from the Treasury Department. The note is described as on the Central National Bank of San Angelo, Texas; series 1902; check letter "A"; the names of Gabe E. Parker, Register of the Treasury, and John Burke, Treasurer of the United States, are signed. The note also bears the portrait of Hugh McCullough and the charter number 10664. The specimen at hand bears the Treasury number V70349D.

COUNTERFEIT \$5 BILL

The circulation of another counterfeit bill is announced by the Treasury Department in a letter. The new counterfeit note is a five dollar silver certificate described as of the series 1899, with the check letter C and the plate number 40. The signature of W. C. Elliot, Registrar of the Treasury, and John Burke, Treasurer of the United States, are attached. The certificate also bears the portrait of an Indian.

The counterfeit is poorly executed and apparently printed from the etched plates on a single piece of paper bearing red ink lines to imitate the silk fiber of the genuine. The note is so apparently spurious, particularly the back, which is dark green with few of the fine lines of the lathe and ornamental work clearly defined, that it should be readily detected.

GAS WELL NOW ALMOST MILE DEEP

The deepest well in the world has been drilled in Youngsville, Warren county, Pa.

When work ceased recently on account of an injury to the driller, Harry Topper, the hole was almost a mile in depth—5,035 feet, to be exact. Topper injured his hand, and as soon as he is able to use it drilling will be resumed.

The well is the property of the Starr Oil and Gas Company, composed of I. L. Anderson, the original promoter; his brother, Alvin, and Hugh

Kemar. Anderson started the well on May 30, 1821, hoping to strike gas in the Glade sand, but when that sand was encountered it was found to be the poorest in the locality, and Anderson induced the others to enter the venture and drill deeper, says the *Philadelphia North American*.

At 3,385 feet a small volume of gas was found, which encouraged further effort. The drill bit a hard formation at 4,545 feet that is called the Clinton or Medina sand. After drilling through 200 feet of this a slaty formation was pierced, and below a loose red sand was found that is called the Red Medina. The company intends to drill 100 feet into this formation before abandoning the undertaking, although no gas or oil in paying quantities is yet indicated.

Great difficulty is experienced in drilling to this depth, due to the great weight of the cable and tools.

LAUGHS

History Prof—Why are the Middle Ages known as the Dark Ages? Wise Fresh—Because there were so many knights.

Aunt—Is your sister improving in her music? Small Nephew—I fancy so. The people next door have decided to move.

Wife—How did Mr. Bilkins manage to pass that civil service examination which you failed in? Husband—Bilkins took his little boys with him, and the boys coached him. They had only been out of school a few weeks.

"Has your daughter a voice that could help in the choir?" Mother—Mercy, yes! When she's out of humor, you can hear her talkin' for half a square.

Teacher—Now, Tommy, suppose you had two apples, and you gave another boy his choice of them. You would tell him to take the bigger one, wouldn't you? Tommy—No. Teacher—Why? Tommy—'Cos 'twould not be necessary.

An English sailor was watching a Chinaman who was placing a dish of rice by a grave. "When do you expect your friend to come out and eat that?" the sailor asked. "Same time your friend come out to smellee flowers you fellow put," retorted Li.

"I hev come to tell ye, Mrs. Malone, that yer husband met with an accident." "An' what is it now?" wailed Mr. Malone. "He was overcome by the heat, mum." "Overcome by the heat, was he? An' how did it happen?" "He fell into the furnace over at the foundry, mum."

"Here is an apple, Willie. Divide it generously with your sister." "How shall I divide it generously, mamma?" "Why, always give the larger part to the other person, my child!" Willie reflected for a moment; then he handed the apple to his little sister, saying: "Here, Ethel, you divide it!"

GOOD READING

TINIEST BABY IN THE WORLD

The tiniest baby in the world was born recently in Victoria Park, London, and is thriving. She is a twin daughter of Mrs. Cox and weighed only one pound at birth. Her sister, weighing 8½ pounds, died soon after birth.

Mrs. Clarke, her grandmother, said to a *Daily Mail* reporter: "I wrapped her in cotton wool, covered her with a woolen shawl, and put her in a sewing machine box. I put in hot water bottles and placed the box before the fire, which is kept going day and night.

"She is bathed with oil several times a day. Her feet are so small that they could be covered by a pair of doll's shoes."

A NEW VEGETABLE

A new plant introduced into New York's school gardens this year is the dasheen. The United States Government received it from the West Indian Islands. After testing it it was believed that this plant would become a valuable addition to our food supply in different parts of the country. It grows extensively in the Southern States.

The plant grows to a height of four to six feet with luxurious tropical leaves which are large and broad. These leaves are commonly called "elephant ears." The tubers form in a hill under the plant and they resemble potatoes. They may be boiled, baked or fried more quickly than potatoes. The dasheen is richer in protein and starch and has a very rich flavor between a potato and a chestnut. The flesh of the dasheen is firm and dry and they vary in color from cream to a grayish lavender when cooked.

This plant needs a rich, sandy soil in which the tubers are planted whole about three inches deep. They are ready to harvest about seven months after planting. It is said that the flavor is similar to that of the asparagus.

HISTORY CLASS WANTS 13-CENT STAMP BACK

Postmaster General Work has received from members of the American history class of Shepherd College State Normal School, Shepherdstown, W. Va., a petition that the Post Office Department again issue 13-cent stamps, recently abandoned. The petition declares that the entire history of the United States is bound up in the figure 13, and gives the following historical reasons why the stamp should be issued:

America was discovered on the night of the thirteenth of the month.

The Republic originally consisted of thirteen colonies.

The first official flag had thirteen stars and thirteen stripes.

The American Eagle requires thirteen letters to spell it, as does also the motto "E Pluribus Unum."

The first word to pass over the transatlantic cable was transmitted on the thirteenth of the month.

The silver quarter is written all over with thirteen. Around the head of Liberty are thirteen stars; the eagle bears an olive branch with

thirteen leaves in one claw and thirteen thunderbolts in the other. On his breast is a shield bearing thirteen bars and in his beak is a ribbon bearing the motto with thirteen letters; each wing has thirteen feathers and it takes thirteen letters to spell quarter dollar.

There are thirteen letters in John Paul Jones's name.

There were thirteen ships in the first American navy.

Perry's victory on Lake Erie was won on the thirteenth of the month.

The Stars and Stripes were raised over Fort Sumter on the thirteenth of the month.

General Pershing arrived in France on June 13, 1917.

The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution freed the slaves.

BAD MEN OF THE OLD FRONTIER

Among the many desperadoes who menaced the public in the then Territory of Oklahoma in the late '80s and early '90s was the notorious "Dalton gang," consisting of Bob, Grant, Emmett and Bill Dalton, aided by various confederates, prominent among whom were Dick Broadwell and Bill Powers. Bill Dalton had no hand in the final raid of the outlaw band on the two banks at Coffeyville, Kan., Oct. 5, 1892.

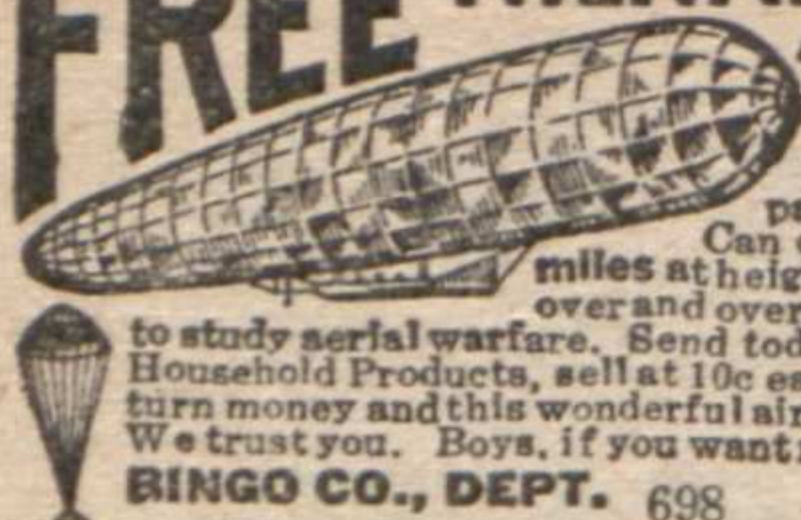
The Dalton gang rode into Coffeyville, being reinforced in this raid of Powers and Broadwell. They trotted their horses boldly down the main street, the Dalton brothers wearing false beards, as they were well known in the town. They were recognized, however, by a merchant named McKenna, who quickly spread the alarm that "the Daltons were in town on mischief."

Meantime the bandits had entered an alley in the rear of one of the banks. Here they tied their horses and prepared for action. Grant Dalton, Powers and Broadwell entered the C. M. Condon Bank, while Bob and Emmett hastened into the First National Bank across the street. The officials of both banks when intimidated with guns, blandly informed the robbers that the time-lock in the vaults would not be off for 15 minutes. The bandits waited.

During this wait the town was arming itself, and bullets began to fly through the windows of the Condon Bank. In the First National about \$20,000 in greenbacks was secured and stuffed into a grain sack, and Bob and Emmett Dalton escaped to the alley by a rear door. Here they were joined by the other bandits, who had secured about \$3,000.

A terrific fight took place in and near this alley, three or four citizens being killed and several wounded. John Kloehr, a liveryman, killed Bob and Grant Dalton, and Bill Powers were also shot dead. Broadwell was fatally wounded and was found dead just outside town. Emmett was seriously shot, but recovered and was sentenced to the penitentiary for life, but was pardoned in 1907, and is now living a respectable life. Bill Dalton was killed in the Indian Territory in 1894 while resisting arrest.—E. A. Brininstool in *Adventure Magazine*.

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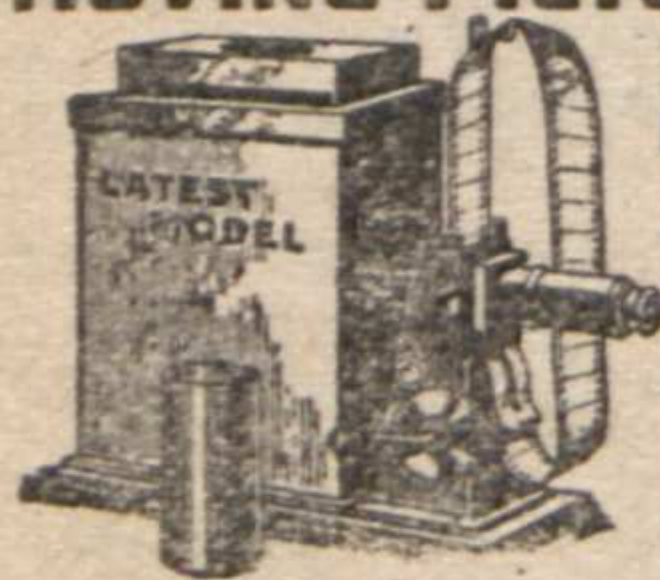
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MARRY RICH—Hundreds anxious. Description list free. Select Club, Dept. A, Rapid City, So. Dakota.

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GRIZZLY INVADES HOTEL

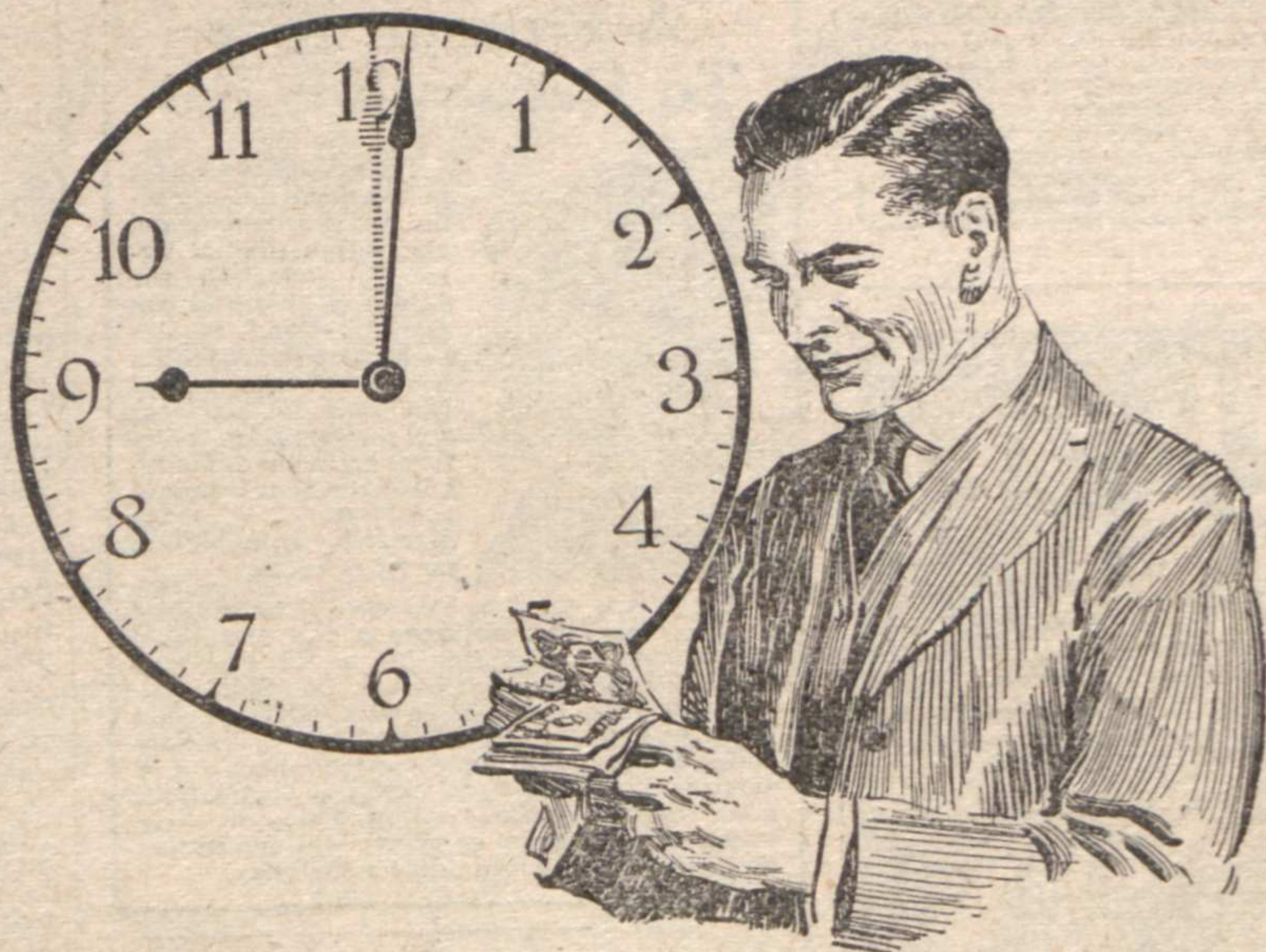
How a hungry bear caused \$3,000 damage to the Many Glacier Hotel of the Glacier National Park recently was reported the other day by the National Parks Bureau.

The hotel being boarded up for the winter, the animal tore the front door off its heavy hinges and entered the main dining room. Finding no waiter to serve him, he proceeded to the kitchen, opened the icebox, and partook of a huge repast of honey, jam, bacon, flour, sugar and ham.

Then he rolled in the sugar and flour.

After dinner he smashed the windows and shutters of the cafeteria and jumped fifteen feet to the ground. In his foray he broke five wagon loads of china, glassware, shelves and food containers, and threw out of the windows a lot of plunder with evident intention of carrying it off.

The easy pickings made him bold, and when he returned for a second repast Cyril McGillis, the watchman, met him with a bullet in the neck. The bear proved to be a silver-tipped grizzly nearly eight feet high. His pelt will be presented to the Smithsonian Institution.



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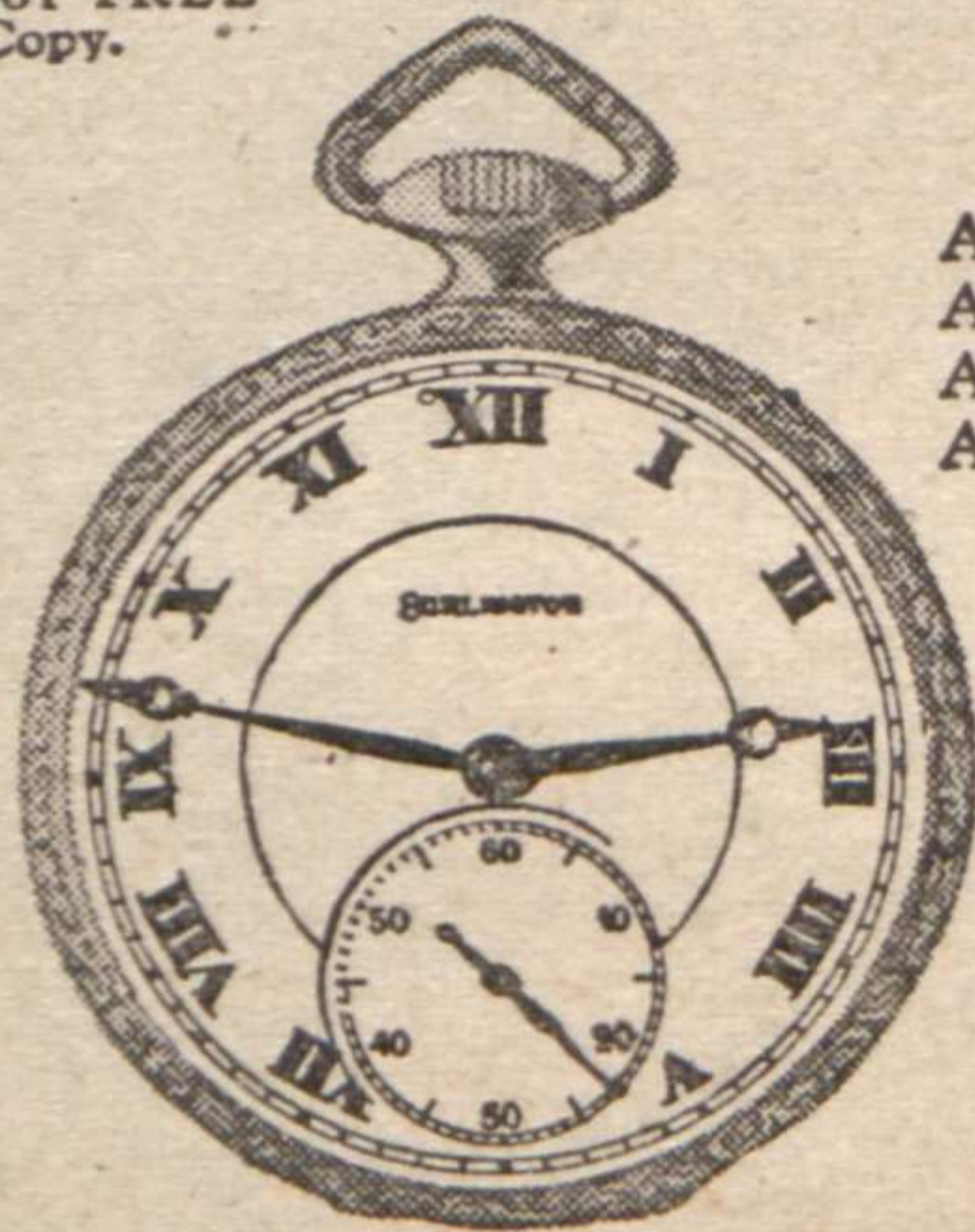
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